



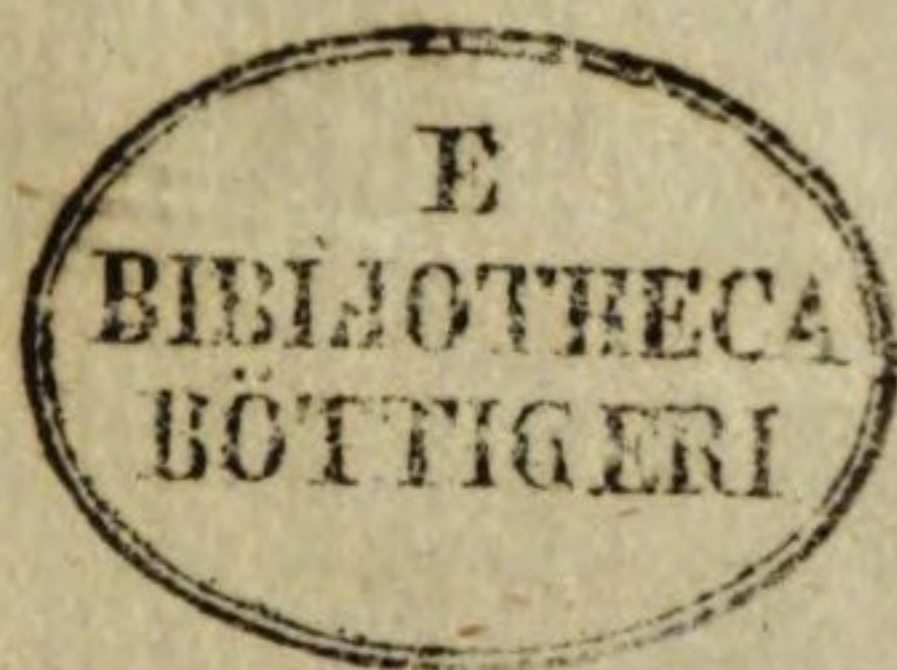


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MEMOIRS  
OF  
HIS OWN LIFE,

BY  
TATE WILKINSON,  
*PATENTEE OF THE THEATRES-ROYAL, YORK & HULL.*  
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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—IF I HAD HELD MY PEN BUT HALF AS WELL AS  
I HAVE HELD MY BOTTLE—WHAT A CHARMING  
HAND I SHOULD HAVE WROTE BY THIS TIME!

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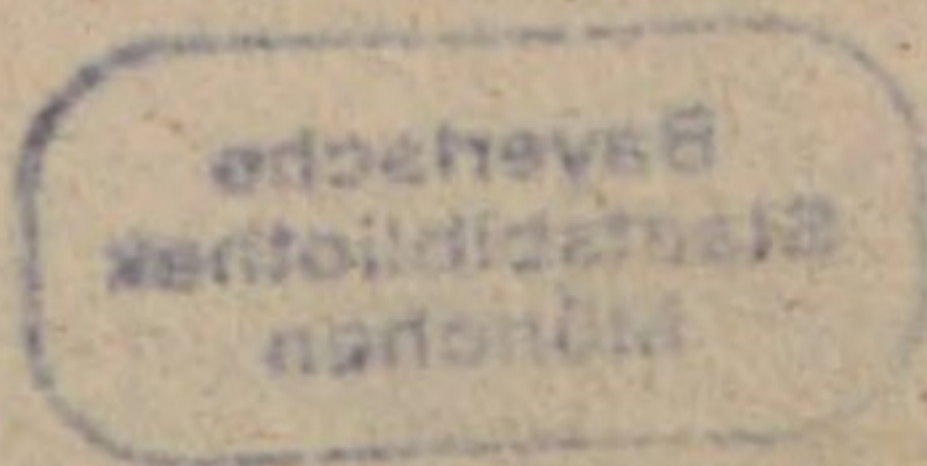
VOL. III.

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*Anno 1790.*





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# M E M O I R S

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## TATE WILKINSON.

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**T**HE present to Mr. Rich procured me an invitation to dine with him, which favour I did not accept, but paid my devoirs to him at his morning levees.—My old master, Rich, one day said to me, “*Mustet Williamskin*, you are much improved since I first began to *larn* you; I think I must engage you.—Name your terms.” I then proposed (on that hint) a plan for such a number of nights rather than for the season:—He instantly agreed, and Mr. Foote’s Minor was fixed on for immediate preparation; nay, he deigned to desire me to cast the parts, I was in such sudden favour; as he said, with truth, he knew nothing of *Mustet Footy’s* farce. Mrs. Rich was a Methodist,—not that I mention it as a recommendation, or that she was a better Christian for bowing at the shrine



of Nonsense and Hypocrisy.—Mr. Foote's lash on Methodism at that time was severely felt by that sect; their composition is gloom, melancholy, envy, and spleen; cheerfulness is seldom observed to dawn on their countenances. Notwithstanding their boasted inspirations, if Methodist preachers had a little reflection, what must they think of daring to pronounce every theatre the devil's house, and all the players the devil's children! I hope they are joking:—and though it may be joking, I am sorry to say it is wicked. To make a complete actor requires more requisites to universally excel than almost any other profession whatever.

The amazing powers displayed by a Garrick, a Barry, a Mrs. Cibber, and a Siddons, and many others, is evidently the hand of God:—He alone could give the finish to such intrinsic merit. And that the Almighty has intended them for that very work is evident; which, if not so produced, the world would have lost seeing the highest pitch of admiration the human frame can aspire to. To mention Shakspeare only, proves more than all the before-mentioned persons, as he is a host, and stands unequalled, as a moral writer, in many points, as well the wonder of the world, as an universal genius.



I do not wish to insinuate that *every Methodist* is an hypocrite, but I mean that I think the greatest part are really so:—So of the preachers, I believe, there are some in earnest, though I fear the number might be easily told. When persons get to the height of a Whitfield and a Wesley's fame for acting, there is a pride as well as a duty in behaving well; and they both laboured hard: but I dare say neither of those gentlemen ever refused a golden ticket for their separate benefits any more than I ever did?—O yes, *I* actually did *once refuse five guineas* at York! but I was *modest* and rejected it; I expected it to be offered a second time—It was not; what then? Why then I was *disappointed*, and never will be so foolish again, if opportunity offers.—Let one of the tabernacle boast the same—they know better—and that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. But, O ye saints of your own creating! I will preach to you—Mark! *Judge not of plays and players, lest you be judged.*

Those who are the most censorious on the infirmities of others, are usually most notoriously guilty of far greater failings themselves; and sanctified Methodistical slander is, of all, the most severe, bitter, and cruel, and is so easily distinguished, unless by the elect, that it is not worth while dwelling any longer upon it.



In the comedy of the Hypocrite the Colonel says, he supposes they go to the play for the benefit of the brethren :—Cantwell answers, “ The charity covereth the sin : ”—which was actually the case ; for in the year 1757, as Shuter was bountiful to the tabernacle, Mr. Whitfield not only permitted, but advised his hearers to attend Shuter’s benefit ; but (*à-la-mode theatre*) for that night only.

A preacher at Hull was once in distress and imprisoned ; I actually sent him a leg of mutton and turneps : previous to that I had been an attendant at his tabernacle ; he entertained great hopes of my conversion, and I certainly confess to the being wicked enough to have been deemed a tolerable Methodist. I had then quitted the old playhouse in Lowgate for a new one in Finklestreet. That the principal performers of conventicles love to follow the smell of a theatre is evident, by their particularly consecrating those unhallowed shops, and thinking them enviable situations to practise their own love-feasts in——“ Put out the light, and then——” So this Rev. Mr. Rutherford, formerly a London coachman, erected his pulpit on the spot where Brutus had been in *his* pulpit also :—the pit he converted into pews, and the stage and side boxes were appropriated for the beaux and belles.——Here follows



(most truly copied) his letter to me, caused partly by the brass rims not being come from York to Hull; for he told me over a bottle, to which he had no aversion, that he wanted a collection to purchase candlesticks, and I having left off using those brass rims, (when Mr. Garrick changed the mode of lighting the stage with six branches that used formerly to be let down at the end of every act, which required a nimble-fingered candle-snuffer) I promised my reverend father the Methodist I would light his tabernacle, aye, and performed it too.

*To TATE WILKINSON, Esq.*

“DEAR SIR,

“AS your engagements in public and mine run  
 “counter, I did not know when to wait on you as  
 “to a proper season; and therefore as you were so  
 “good and sympathising to act from such a noble  
 “spirit of humanity to the distressed as proposing  
 “to take a pew in my chapel in Lowgate, I  
 “shall leave these four best pews to the generosity  
 “of the persons that engage; so whoever leads  
 “the way will be a pattern for the others. I ve-  
 “rily think, without the least flattery, that your  
 “encouragement of such things will be such an  
 “honour to the stage, and bespeak the same to  
 “the comedians, as will perpetuate your name



“ more than Alexander the Great’s. I shall be  
 “ glad to know what place you fix on, and when I  
 “ shall wait on you, and whether the *candlesticks*  
 “ *are come*. May Heaven load you with all kind  
 “ of blessings for time and an unseen world.

“ From your humble and

“ Much obliged servant,

Hull, Jan. 10, “ ROB. RUTHERFORD,”  
 1771.

At times I have heard good discourses from Mr. Whitfield, delivered with energy, feeling, and pathos, but then he had been really and truly an actor on the stage in the early part of his life; and as he liked tragedy, and found that a pair of squinting eyes (as may be seen by his print) did not move the young ladies’ tender hearts, but produced laughter instead of tears, he d——d the stage, and ever after stuck to that text; but he often melted and squeezed to some purpose many a rich dowager, who felt the power of his feelings from their mutual sympathy. The low stuff of the preachers in general is not worth repeating; but to shew I have not often attended without sometimes being a good boy, I will begin with the second best performer in that line I ever saw, and give his harangue verbatim; and tho’ but frothy stuff, it is much better, and more like reason than the damnation so terribly thundered out,



too often in stage invective ; so much so, that were they not hardened by the familiarity of their fire, brimstone, and pitchforks, if it thundered I should fear less if in a playhouse than in the tabernacle, particularly if near the preacher.

Mr. Wesley about four years ago, in the fields at Leeds, for want of room for his congregation in his tabernacle, gave an account of himself by informing us, That when he was at college he was particularly fond of the devil's pops (or cards) ; and said, that every Saturday he was one of a constant party at Whist, not only for the afternoon, but also for the evening ; he then mentioned the names of several respectable gentlemen who were with him at college.—“But,” continued he, “the latter part of my time there I became acquainted with the Lord, I used to hold communication with him. On my first acquaintance,” said Wesley, “I used to talk with the Lord once a week, then every day, from that to twice a day, till at last the intimacy so increased, that He appointed a meeting once in every four hours.” He recollected, he said, the last Saturday he ever played at cards, that the rubber at Whist was longer than he expected ; and on observing the tediousness of the game, he pulled out his watch, when to his shame he found it was some minutes past eight, which was beyond the time he had appointed to meet the Lord:—He



thought the devil had certainly tempted him to stay beyond his hour, he therefore suddenly gave his cards to a gentleman near him to finish the game, and went to the place appointed, beseeching forgiveness for his crime, and resolved never to play with the devil's pops again. That resolution he had never broken; and what was more extraordinary, that his brother and sister, though distant from Cambridge, experienced signs of grace on that same day, on that same hour, in the month of October. After the easy acquaintance he had made, the idea of which I think too solemn to declare and mention in the familiar manner those self-elected people do. What must have become of all the tribes before us for the last seventeen hundred years but damnation? How unfortunate that Methodism did not start up through a trap-door many centuries ago! What a hypocritical led-by-the-nose world it would then have been!

Mr. Wesley, after expatiating on the devil's pops, said, "Now, my dear friends! if you think there is no harm follows from playing at cards, why play at cards:—If you think, my dear brethren, there is no harm in hunting a poor little hare and depriving it of life, why you may go a-hunting without being guilty of sin:—I do not say you will be d——d for that, provided in your



conscience you do not think you are doing wrong.—If you think there is no harm in playing with the devil's books, or going to an assembly, where you shall stay till two or three o'clock in the morning, and where they dance belly to belly and back to back, and put themselves in the most unseemly postures—why, if you think there is no harm in going to that assembly, you may go. I am told," continued Wesley, "you have a wicked playhouse in Leeds—I do not say you will be d——d for going to see a play, if you think there is no harm in seeing a play. But now, my dear brethren, let me call you to a recollection of these trifling matters: Though you have heard me repeat that I do not pronounce damnation on my hearers for playing with the devil's pops, or for killing a harmless hare and depriving it of life—though I have not said the devil is with spreading arms expecting to receive you, but that you may go to an assembly, or even to the devil's house, without damnation; yet, my dear brethren, if instead of the devil's pops, the going a-hunting, or to the dancing assembly, or to see a play, you can, like me, get acquainted and enter into conversation and intimacy with the Lord, who will talk, who will hold converse with you here on earth—how can you prefer such vanities of this foolish world to



real blifs in this and the world to come?"——  
Here ends Mr. Wesley.

The Rev. Mr. Whitfield (the first actor in the Methodist walk) was of a contrary cast entirely, and not without humour here and there. His dialect was very particular—*Lurd* instead of Lord, *Gud* instead of God—as, *O Lurd Gud!*

I remember a text of his was—*May we all work the harder.*—"There was a poor woman, and she was a long time before she was converted: she was three-score years and ten—yes she was;—she was three-score years and ten:—" Sir, (says she to the good man that converted her) Sir, (says she) I am three-score years and ten, I have been a long time about it: but Sir, (says she) I will work the harder;—yes, Sir, (says she) I will work the harder!" And O! may you all like that dear good woman work the harder." Then followed a groan of applause; for he had, like Mr. Bayes, a selected number in his pit that understood their cues, and were sure to applaud, and the rest of the house followed of course. Then Whitfield, looking round the rails of his little desk below—"What, you young ones! why you are some of you twelve, some fourteen, and some sixteen years of age, yet you do not think of going to hell? What!" exclaimed Whitfield, "twelve and fourteen years of age, and not thinking of going to hell! O ye little



brats you !”—and at that instant the old women groaned, and, like fell Charybdis, murmured hoarse applause ; and Whitfield shook his head, and growled in his white wig, exactly like my performance of Squintum, as I actually practised it from the serious comical discourse I am now relating. Whitfield then proceeded thus--“ You go to plays ! and what do you see there ? Why, if you will not tell me, I will tell you what you see there !—When you see the players on the stage, you see the devil’s children grinning at you ; and when you go to the playhouse, I suppose you go in ruffles—I wonder whether St. Paul wore ruffles ? No ; there were no ruffles in those days. I am told,” continued he archly, “ that people say I bawl—well I allow it, I do bawl, and I will bawl—I will not be a velvet-mouthed preacher, I will not speak the word of *God* in a sleepy manner, like your church preachers—I’ll tell you a story.

“ The Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 1675, was acquainted with Mr. Betterton the player. One day the Archbishop of Canterbury said to Betterton the player, “ Pray inform me Mr. Betterton, what is the reason you actors on the stage can affect your congregations with speaking of things imaginary, as if they were real, while we in the church speak of things real, which our congregations only receive as if they were ima-



ginary?" "Why, my Lord, (says Betterton the player) the reason is very plain—we actors on the stage, speak of things imaginary, as if they were real, and you in the pulpit speak of things real, as if they were imaginary." Therefore," added Whitfield, "I will bawl, I will not be a velvet-mouthed preacher."

I leave the reader to judge on the good reasoning of Methodism. I cannot help noticing for the honour of the stage, that Mr. Whitfield could not have betrayed himself into a better story for its credit—(his pointing out an intimacy between the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury and Mr. Betterton): And for the actor, he could not have given a more substantial and revered authority. And what a joke for Mr. Whitfield to pronounce damnation on players, when he certainly avowed in his own opinion, that Mr. Betterton was, what all the world ever acknowledged him to be, a scholar and gentleman of honour; and Mr. Whitfield gave the players reasoning and exemplification, for his own mode of preaching. But hypocrisy, like the cloven foot, will sometimes be espied.

Some of the wild preachers of this kind, often remind me of Antonio in the Merchant of Venice—



Mark you this Bassanio !  
 The devil can cite scripture for his purpose ;  
 An evil soul, producing holy witness,  
 Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,  
 A goodly apple, rotten at the heart.  
 O ! what a goodly outside falsehood hath !

Bell's edition bears this note on these lines. A most excellent remark this ; for daily experience proves, that some of the worst characters breathing, seek shelter under scriptural texts ; by the misapplication or misconstruction of which, also, opposite sects uncharitably consign each other to eternal punishment.

As a striking instance of good-will, charity, and mildness, being prevalent in the minds of Methodists, I insert the following paragraph from Mr. Bowling's Leeds paper——

“ At York Assizes, William Richards, for robbing the Theatre-Royal, was ordered to be transported for seven years ; and on the Western Circuit, a man was convicted of robbing a Methodist Chapel, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment. Thus, in the eye of the law, a *House of Prayer* is just one seventh the value of a *Den of Thieves*.

LEEDS MERCURY, 1790.

But now for my tabernacle at Covent-Garden, where myself and Mr. Rich were lately casting the



comedy of the Minor, and which was the occasion of my preaching. Mr. Rich and I were on such sudden terms of violent friendship, that he insisted I should cast the parts. I put down the Minor, Mr. Dyer;—Richard Wealthy, Mr. Sparks, &c. &c. &c.

The morning after, a note came from Mr. Sparks for Mr. Rich, to the following purport: “Mr. Sparks’s compliments to Mr. Rich, he is concerned at being obliged to return the part of Richard Wealthy; but as he is given to understand Mr. Wilkinson is engaged, and is to sustain the principal characters in the comedy, Mr. Sparks cannot consent by any means to perform or assist in any piece, for the advantage of a villain, who unprovoked has endeavoured to hurt him in his peace of mind, and injure his reputation, as an actor, with the public.”—When Mr. Rich gave me the note to read, it perplexed me much; but I immediately adverted to my very disagreeable situation when at Drury-Lane, and that I had given up every idea of offending the actors of Covent-Garden: that by the artifice of Mr. Garrick and Mr. Foote I was forced on the stage at Drury-Lane, in 1758, against my own consent: and requested Mr. Rich further to observe, that when my own benefits happened at Drury-Lane, in 1758 and 1759, not any actor whatever had been offended by any imitations or



mimicry from me ; that my sole aim was levelled at Mr. Foote, for the ill-treatment I had received from him : and as a stronger proof, I referred to my conduct in Dublin the winter before, where I had not created a single enemy by such behaviour ; nor at my benefit the spring before at Drury-Lane, or offered any entertainment of the kind, either from the desire of my friends, the public, or even to assist my own emolument on my late benefits in London, which it certainly must be acknowledged it would have done, and much to my advantage ; but I readily lessened my own profits rather than incur enmity : I had in consequence of that consideration hoped, that I had cleared myself from all intentional injury to Mr. Sparks or other gentlemen. This fully proved to my own mind, for once in my life, the good policy of having laid by imitative talents, (Mr. Foote excepted) all that time : for had I kept publicly practising those shining qualities, as I judged them, and though I was then certainly in great estimation (while under the trammels of Mr. Foote and Mr. Garrick) ; yet had I at the latter part of my time with him made too free with my brethren of the theatres, very likely I should not have stood any chance of rising again in London hastily, or have been ever received at Covent-Garden theatre. Indeed I might have subsisted on Mr.



Garrick's flaps of the shoulders of mutton, but, like poor Jerry Sneak, not have got a bit of the brown. My reasons to Mr. Rich worked as palliatives in my behalf, and had much weight with him. He sent for Sparks, and in his manner related to him what *Mr. Williamskin* had said: Sparks in a short time was cool and pacified, and said, On the whole it appeared perfectly clear that the young man was not so much to blame as he had supposed: that it was apparent Wilkinfon had not received any reward or gratuity for what he had done, from either of his masters Foote or Garrick; but on the contrary they had been guilty of meanness and ingratitude: And Sparks concluded with not only his declared acceptance of the part, but offered every assistance to the rehearsals to aid and bring the Minor forward: for its being levelled as a stroke at Foote, tickled Sparks, as gratifying his ancient grudge. Though Mr. Foote's acquaintance was universal, yet as all knew he spared neither friend nor foe, there could not be the least reason to apprehend a shadow of resentment from the audience by any attack of mimicry played on Mr. Foote himself from any opponent, as Mr. Foote attacked every body, and, like Drawcanfir, might have said to his friends—

I huff, I bluff, I strut, look big, and stare,  
And this I do because—I dare, I dare!



A most intimate friend of Mr. Foote's wrote to me the following lines, on my being displeased, and is a strong likeness.—

“Mr. Wilkinson you should have known him better long before this time of day; then you would have looked upon him as a peculiar man, with such gifts of originality relative to men, manners, and places—whether he is in general right or wrong, I will not pretend to say; but I will give you this as my own opinion, that if he is wrong, it is difficult to dispute with him; and when he is right, it is impossible to answer him.”

Peace being settled, and myself one of the Covent-Garden company, Foote soon got intelligence from spies in our royal camp, of what was going forward: he was much enraged, and not having forgiven my freedoms with him at Dublin the winter before, he thought I pursued him like his evil spirit. And one morning when I was sitting at the grand levee at Mr. Rich's, with my new friend Sparks in council of war, we were alarmed with a thundering rat-tat and ringing of the bell also, when a servant announced Mr. Foote was come to wait on Mr. Rich; and instead of being ushered into the grand saloon, he had been shewn into the parlour.

Mr. Rich went down to Mr. *Footseye*, as he called him, but the visit was not accompanied by



a calm, for it was most violent, blustering, and boisterous. Mr. Foote furiously exclaimed—“Damn it, you old hound! if you dare let Wilkinfon, that pug nosed son of a b——h, take any liberty with me as to mimicry, I will bring you yourself, Rich, on the stage! If you want to engage that pug, black his face, and let him hand the tea-kettle in a pantomime; for damn the fellow he is as ignorant as a whore’s maid! And if he dares to appear in my characters, in the Minor, I will,” said Foote, “instantly produce your old stupid ridiculous self, with your three cats, and your hound of a mimic altogether, next week at Drury-Lane, for the general diversion of the pit, boxes, and galleries; and that will be paying you, you squinting old Hecate, too great a compliment!” And after a few sarcasms Foote hastily departed, denouncing vengeance on him and his cats, and immediately Mr. Rich appeared with a most woeful countenance, and said, why *Mustfer Sparkish*, *Mustfer Footseye* has been here, and he says if I let *Mustfer Williamskin* act his parts on the stage, *Mustfer Sparkish*, he will write parts for me, my cats, and *Mustfer Williamskin*, and bring us all upon the stage; so we must not act what we intended.” “Why surely, Sir,” said Sparks, “you cannot be so weak as to let Mr. Foote’s vapouring visit frighten you from your purpose, or intimidate you from having a piece acted that may be



of service to your theatre, and to the young gentleman. Is it not truly strange and laughable, that Mr. Foote, of all people, should confess himself galled, and exert his wit against mimicry—he who has been for years an universal torturer and spoiler of private peace, from the licentious liberties he has taken? Now, Mr. Rich,” added Sparks, “let me interest myself in this matter, I augur success; therefore let us of Covent-Garden-theatre, immediately rally our forces, take the field, let slip the dogs of war, and act the Minor in defiance of his own guards at Drury-Lane.” Rich agreed, seemed pleased—but he was still frightened of Foote, and I believe, dreaded an affront on his favourite cat more than on himself; all was settled to have the performance brought forward as soon as possible: for, as Sparks observed,—“*advantage fed them fat while we delayed.*” Indeed the Minor was ready at Drury-Lane, and they meant not to lose time; for Foote entertained not the least doubt of victory.

We, from various obstacles, could not get it decently on the stage in less than a fortnight, as other pieces were preparing, such as Mr. Macklin’s new comedy of the Married Libertine; his Love-a-la-Mode; and Mr. Beard and Miss Brent, were rehearsing Dr. Arne’s new opera of Thomas and Sally; which all considered, made it seem dif-



ficult to get our Minor produced. And on the end of the week that this matter had been settled, it was advertised on the Thursday from Drury-Lane, and on the Saturday was pasted on every wall—The MINOR; and that favourite little comedy had been all the week puffed and paragraphed in every newspaper by Mr. Foote. But unforeseen events sometimes do and undo what our utmost wisdom and wishes cannot, as here was an extraordinary instance; for the bills were but a few hours exhibited to public view, when it so happened they were as hastily plucked down as they had been vigilantly put up; it was on Saturday the 25th of October, 1760, when the sudden death of our truly beloved and lamented monarch King George II. occasioned, for three weeks, a suspension of theatrical hostilities and diversions of all kinds in the great city of London. And I seriously wish (abstracted from self) some alleviation could be considered for a truly loyal set of people, the actors, on such a melancholy occasion: For though it is undeniable that every attention and grateful demeanour should be indispensibly observed on such an awful stroke, and that a hoity toity following of diversions would be highly improper, and that every duty to such solemnity is due, yet it certainly falls cruelly on the poor player, I reverence and love my king, my



prince, and my country, as the most faithful subject in his majesty's dominions ; yet at such really mournful times, the poor player, in a middling class, who *struts his life upon the stage*, is certainly destitute of daily bread, becomes distressed, and absolutely reduced to being a charity-dependent, where the weekly stipend had been merely an existence ; and too likely, if encumbered with a family, plunged into debt and future misery. It may easily be credited that whenever such a calamity happens, (and which in the course of nature must happen) many are not in possession of a shilling ; it is even a hardship to those who possess economy, which some actors and actresses, to their great credit and good sense do, as Mr. Robertson, formerly of the York company, is an instance, and an honour as a man and actor to mention, and several others whose incomes have been very confined.

Now, as a good subject, my stock was truly great on the sudden surprise and loss of my monarch, whose name I had prattled from childhood——

Monarchs, sages, peasants must  
Follow thee and come to dust.

My own situation at that time did not suffer, as thank God, I possessed every needful requisite then



to render life happy and every way agreeable, so the theatre being closed for a few weeks was not any inconvenience to my particular self; but the poor actor at such a time must be rejoiced if the landlord is in good humour, and will chalk up instead of receiving cash; but then the day of retribution must and will appear in black and white—

Thus comes the reck'ning when the banquet's o'er.

It so happened and came to pass, during that serious vacation, that the Minor was brought to maturity at Covent-Garden theatre; and what is more extraordinary, by the indefatigable attention and eagerness of Mr. Sparks——

Once my mortal foe.

When Drury-Lane again opened, the first Saturday they published the Minor, with Mr. Foote, &c. I posted myself in the gallery. Mr. Foote was received, as usual, with great eclat, by a most brilliant and crowded audience; that comedy being in as much vogue then, or more so, than any favourite piece at the present day of 1790, (the run and rage of the School for Scandal, and Duenna, being now over.)—When the comedy was finished I hastened to Covent-Garden, and urged Mr. Rich to produce the Minor as soon as possible; when Mr. Dyer (who was to act the part of Sir George, and who was the particular intimate of



Sparks) judged it a political stroke to give out that piece for the Monday following; and though the play before intended had been given out, we prevailed on Mr. Rich, and the Minor was announced, as by particular desire, for the Monday: Mr. Foote's characters of Shift, Smirk, Mrs. Cole, and the Epilogue, by Mr. Wilkinfon. It was not only honoured with an overflowing theatre, but had a very great reception, and it had a considerable run; and in that puff I had the advantage, for Mr. Rich's new matters were not ready for representation, therefore I was the more wanted.—Mr. Foote shared the profits of his night's performance; for that reason, therefore, if Garrick had any thing strong to advertise, or wished to play himself, Mr. Foote was obliged to give way. On the second night of my performance, Mr. Rich at the end of the Minor brought an article for me to sign, accompanied by Mr. Wood, his son-in-law, an attorney; the purport was, one hundred guineas for playing till the first of January, and a benefit when I chose to appoint it. It was a very genteel offer, as my benefit considered, made it of real consequence to me, and of course the proposal was by me accepted, signed, and sealed. On the first night, in the performance of Shift, I broke loose into my imitative



qualities, which I had not practised (as to actors) in London for two years.

Mossop had but the year before gone to Ireland; he was very peculiar, very popular, and well recollected: I was very like him indeed, and was obliged to repeat his speeches of Zaphimri in the Orphan of China.

To prove what odd mortals we are as to our love and our hate, Sparks, who I related as formerly to have been my professed enemy, was now turned to the other extreme, and was my hearty well-wisher. On my leaving the stage as Shift, he took me fast by the hand and wished me joy, and burst out into a violent fit of laughing:—Says I, “Mr. Sparks, what are you laughing at?” “Why,” replied he, “I am laughing at myself, Sir: for two years ago I was bloody angry at you for the carrying me into company where I was not; yet your imitation of Mossop was so strong, that I was irresistibly pleased whether I would or no: so I am laughing at my own absurdity.” Those imitations having been bottled up by me so long had then double the effect, and made Shift a star in the Minor.—My introduction in the character of Foote was truly Foote from top to toe; and as to Mr. Garrick I made no scruple, though I had him before me, as his curiosity had led him to see me, not expecting that I would take him off, or he would



not have been so publicly surrounded, but have carefully avoided such a queer situation. My imitations were never told either in bill or newspaper who they were designed for ; but whenever I was particularly lucky, the audience would repeat the name, as Sparks ! Sparks ! Barry ! Barry ! Nor was I a little pleased when repeating from Macbeth, "Who can be wise, amazed, &c." I heard the audience echo from one to the other, "O Garrick ! Garrick !" — O thought I, my master, this is my day of triumph ! — and from that night he never forgave or forgot his being so surrounded in the front box, nor did he ever speak to me again to the day of his death.

My Whitfield was beyond compare ; his manner was then universally known. — Mr. Foote was struck by stepping in by chance, and once hearing Whitfield ; the mixture of whose absurdity, whim, consequence, and extravagance, pleased his fancy and entertained him highly, as Whitfield that day was dealing out damnation, fire, and brimstone as cheerfully as if they were so many blessings. What pity it is that our fears only, and not our reason, will bring conviction ; but reason, handed by unaffected pure piety and religion, would be a day of woe to Methodism, and lessen their audiences in many tabernacles, where they are certain to lament preaching to no-



body, though at the same time wedged to the outer doors, and on the Sunday exclaiming at the full crowded theatres, which have probably been almost deserted. But Mr. Foote was only a spy at Whitfield's academy, while I had been a zealot for some seasons before my encounter at Covent Garden with Mr. Foote. My attendance had been constant with my friend Shuter, and as he actually was one of the new-born, and paid large sums to Whitfield, I was always permitted to stay with him, for he really was bewildered in his brain, more by wishing to acquire imaginary grace than by all his drinking: and whenever he was warm with the bottle, and with only a friend or two, like Maw-worm he could not mind his shop because he thought it a sin, and wished to go a preaching; for Shuter, like Maw-worm, believed he had had a call. I have gone with Shuter at six in the morning of a Sunday to Tottenham-Court-Road, then before ten to Mr. Wesley's in Long-Acre, at eleven again to Tottenham-Court-Road tabernacle, dined near Bedlam in Moorfields (a very proper place for us both) with a party of the Holy Ones, went at three to Mr. Wesley's theatre there, (the tabernacle I mean) from that to Whitfield's in Moorfields till eight, and then shut up to commune with the family-compact. Now with all this practice and attention, and with my



natural talents, I must have been a blockhead indeed not to have gleaned some good things ; (and doubtless Mr. Whitfield was at times a good preacher, and truly excellent.) I therefore really exhibited and obtained a much stronger likeness as Dr. Squintum than Mr. Foote did. The week before my Covent-Garden exhibition I met my friend Shuter at the tabernacle ; a great coolness had continued for some time, as we had not spoke to, or even looked at each other since the breach between us in the year 1758 ; but as we were met together in a place of charity and forgiveness to all who subscribed to the dictator, we became very sociable, and before the conclusion of Whitfield's lecture were perfectly reconciled : We adjourned to the Rose, and by three the next morning were sworn friends, and continued so till death called him away.—Indeed he was above eleven years older than me, and would have been sixty-three had he lived to this time. Ned Shuter was a lively, spirited, shrewd companion ; superior natural whim and humour surely never inhabited a human breast, for what he said and did was all his own, as it was with difficulty he could read the parts he had to play, and could not write at all ; he had attained to sign an order, but no more : Nature could not have bestowed her gifts to greater advantage than on



poor Ned, as what she gave he made shine, not only conspicuously but brilliantly, and that to the delight of all who knew him on or off the stage—he might be truly dubbed “The Child of Nature:”—He was no man’s enemy but his own. Peace, rest, and happiness, I hope he now possesses—for the poor, the friendless, and the stranger he often comforted; and when sometimes reduced by his follies, he never could see a real object in misery and resist giving at least half he was worth to his distressed fellow-creature.

My popularity that year of the Minor was such, that my acquaintance I might truly term universal. My benefit was the week before Christmas, and was not only crowded, but honourably attended, which put my finances into a most respectable accumulation, though my free living from place to place was very expensive, and indeed extravagant:—Yet the reader is to observe my benefits in general were all free from any charges, and were what we on the stage term *clear benefits*; and my night being numerously attended in the middle of a winter season in such a metropolis as London cannot be judged a phænomenon.

That season at Covent-Garden theatre, the day after acting the character of Mr. Foote in the introduction to the Minor, I received an anonymous letter, and recollected the same sentiments



had been conveyed to me in the like manner three seasons before after my benefit-night at Drury-Lane, on taking off Mr. Foote as himself, not as an actor on the stage. The contents were nearly as follows :——

*To Mr. WILKINSON.*

“ SIR,

“ THOUGH your imitation of Mr. Foote last  
 “ night was certainly great, yet your twitch-  
 “ ing your chin with tweezers was very wrong,  
 “ though well conceived, but on the stage  
 “ it was a blemish, and not any advantage to  
 “ your imitation ; for you should consider the au-  
 “ dience are only judges of Mr. Foote’s public  
 “ stage performance, and not of how he acts or  
 “ speaks when in his own house, and with his  
 “ acquaintance and particular intimates :—there-  
 “ fore omit those peculiarities of Mr. Foote’s,  
 “ and you will not lose, but increase your reputa-  
 “ tion with the town, and the good opinion of

“ S I R,

“ Your well-wisher,

“ A. Z.”

These two notes I often considered, as the re-  
 mark was so just, (though I had not paid obe-  
 dience to the first) and made me guess from that



time to the present that they proceeded from the secret good wishes and knowledge of Mr. Murphy, who was often on parties at Mr. Foote's, and knew what I meant when the public did not:—Whether it was to him I was obliged or no he best can tell; if he did, it may have escaped his memory, and he may not recollect so trivial a circumstance, as it did not relate to himself. Why I take the wisdom to myself of thinking the letters came from Mr. Murphy (who had behaved very kindly to me) is, that in 1759, on my benefit night at Drury-Lane, as I was acting the character of Mr. Foote, he (Mr. Murphy) was sitting in the orchestra; and as I grew elated with applause, and feeling to myself that all I did was right, I too often made use of a particular word, which Mr. Foote thoughtlessly, and from custom, often repeated laughingly in his own room in common conversation; it was a word foolish and indelicate, and by no means fit to be presumptuously or ignorantly mentioned in a public theatre; and I had never thought as to the meaning, but was, I declare, most perfectly innocent of it; and from my rapidity of speech the audience (luckily indeed for me) did not attend to it any more than myself:—And as Mr. Sheridan's Puff in the Critic says, "The players never know when to have done with a good thing," so did I often repeat



this unfit word before a most respectable audience. I saw Mr. Murphy in the orchestra enjoying my performance and applauding, which gave me double vigour; when on a sudden he started up, and I lost, from the situation full before me, him whom I had seen in such high humour, therefore I feared something was very wrong, but what I could not divine;—but I do suppose, what *I said* so repeatedly had frightened him from his pleasant seat:—Luckily for me the loud laughter and applause drowned the senses, or I might have seen more decampments, or myself have been ordered so to do: and I am certain, had I been at that time disgraced I should not have known for why. But all went off to my excess of joy; and when I saw Mr. Murphy some days after, he kindly explained what had drove him from his place, as he declared he trembled for me, and gave me at the same time proper information sufficient to rectify my error and improve my breeding, without need of Johnson's Dictionary for further knowledge. This is a lesson for all imitations to be confined entirely to the modes and manners only with which the audience are acquainted; for the private manners in life of Mr. Garrick, or Mr. Anybody, they are neither familiarized to, nor in the least acquainted with, therefore foolish to add, by way of garnish; as what might please in a private



circle with information, will naturally lessen the merit of the mimicry or satire, instead of increasing it with the public; and indeed it must be allowed as unmannerly as mean, and on no account worthy forgiveness, were it tolerated, to rehearse private foibles, manners, and conversation, on a public stage.

My friendly reader, I fear, will be apt to shrink, and think I have been too liberal in praising and loading myself with encomiums relative to my applause and reputation in London in 1760, as a rival in point of mimicry, in the public estimation, when opposed to Mr. Foote; but I really aver and believe I have not exceeded the strict bounds of truth. As to the exactitude of time and place I am persuaded this olio will stand foremost of almost any produced; self is generally partial, and I am obliged to be the herald of my own praises: for Shakspeare says, "*If a man will not erect his own tomb-stone ere he dies, his memory shall live no longer than his knell rings, and his widow weeps.*——How long is that? An hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum. And so much for praising myself, who I myself will bear witness am praiseworthy."——Indeed I can mention several persons still living who can attest every particular, I am sorry to say not so many as I could wish, as most of my sincere friends and benefactors are now no more.



As a true imitator I stood before Mr. Foote in the public eye; for though he drew characters strongly, yet his manners in point of likeness were not strictly just; besides my partial friends of that time, who cannot now come when they are called, and, for all I know, may now be spirits in the *vastly deep*, yet as theatrical and honourable vouchers I refer to Mr. Macklin and Mr. Murphy, who will not, I trust, deny they often told me I was in some particular imitations incomparable, and I was too well bred then and now to contradict their favourable opinions, but verily think they were good judges, and spoke only the truth. Mr. Macklin has often acted by me as a particular kind friend, and to him I am in debt for many obligations of tender regard paid to my juvenile years, and since; and as I never made him any equal return, confess myself his obliged and grateful debtor. Mr. Murphy I have not the satisfaction or pleasure to call an intimate, or even common acquaintance; my frequent laughs with him at that distant juncture of time were chiefly occasioned by my often meeting him on parties at Mr. Foote's and at the New Exchange coffee-house; but Mr. Macklin and I have often met in Dublin, sometimes in the same theatre, sometimes in our different ships of war; and meet him where I would, I cannot but remember civilities, not only



to me, but to any friend I took in my hand to introduce to him.

With a full purse, a stock of health, and plenty of good friends, my Covent-Garden engagement ended ; after which I soiled till Passion-Week drew near—A week that occasions the players never to forget it is a religious one, though their superiors may not have the same feeling occasion to rub up their memories : but every player and playerefs can recollect that week without a prompter.

Mr. Garrick, as I before observed, continued obdurate ; but thank God I neither wanted his forgiveness nor his favours as a manager.

Early in March I was favoured with a letter from my good friend Mrs. Strode at Portsmouth, informing me, that a world of people were expected there, as a grand expedition was preparing against the French, and the number of officers and subalterns both of army and navy would be incredible just before Easter : that there were no plays going forward, nor any diversions whatever ; and if I could but hit on any entertainment, it would turn out lucrative to me, and be received as a compliment to the town, and all my friends and acquaintance. I made proper inquiries on receiving this pleasing intelligence, and heard every thing Mrs. Strode had mentioned in a manner so



friendly soon confirmed. Now the love of money, added to the allurements of wandering, seemed to me irresistible; I knew nothing could be done there in Passion-Week, though I might prepare for the ensuing holidays, but did not conceive how to manage and contrive without an able assistant. Mrs. Strode, at my request, procured the theatre against my arrival; but one auxiliary at least became indispensably necessary.—I mentioned the matter to my laughing whimsical friend Joseph Austin, who liked a frolic as well as myself; I therefore did not hesitate a moment as to whom I should impart my perplexity: To him I related my new-fangled scheme and want of assistance, also laid before him the glaring temptations of army-officers, &c. and proposed terms of agreement. Without a pause our wise heads settled it immediately; and that we might be more sure of attractive merit, Joseph clapped in his lady as a third performer (a very pretty woman) into the chaise, and on Palm Sunday we sat down to supper at Portsmouth: We found the playhouse as the company of comedians had left it, a mere wreck: They had torn away all traces of its former self—all little ornaments of what it ought to have been—having removed all the wings and ragged scenery for their more remote theatres,



with Juliet's tomb and balcony, even Desdemona's bed

Had been seized by the hands of filthy dungeon villains,  
And thrown amongst the common lumber,

And conveyed in their baggage-cart at Portsmouth to their fortress at Plymouth, themselves having a long and heavy winter march : and indeed I fear the greatest part of that theatrical army were obliged on the expedition to use their legs instead of carriages to obtain safe footing at their distant Devonshire encampment ; which proves the truth of the old proverb—*One half the world knows not how the other half live.*

My friend Joseph and I had a most whimsical entertaining week ; I am sure he never can forget it, as it consisted of oddity and many freakish occurrences. From ten till two at noon we were busily employed with plaistering paper on laths for our wings, and filling up the back part of the stage with something like what we term a flat scene ; indeed we had a carpenter, but Joseph and Tate were the principal workmen. Before the week was expired our playhouse was prepared for the receiving a most splendid audience, with which we were honoured ; even our stage was crowded and produced the best back flat scene I ever saw,



which well paid us for our industry. We were not only gratified with the great house being lucrative and fashionable, but we were still more flattered and pleased by a desire of a second night, and with the assurance of good support; for my own part I had been so fettered and confined while articted by Mr. Garrick, that I was rejoiced at being what I liked to be, and ever will be if I can, *FREE as air*; that by choice shall ever be my motto; therefore the second night was palatable and quite agreeable to me. But here a difficulty arose: I had engaged to perform for my friend Shuter's benefit on Thursday, March 26, and that promise, without breach of word, honour, or friendship, was easy and practicable, as time would just allow it, and not any to spare; but my trepanned friend Joseph, on this smuggled expedition, was likely to be tried for offences at the grand court of Drury by Judge Garrick, a severe judge, who would demand his bond, as Joseph had actually engaged to play the Wednesday night, March 25, a new part wrote by Mrs. Clive for her own benefit; who at writing was (as may with justice be equally said of myself) *a dead good one*. However he was very happy, and temptation lay before him:—So fell Adam—So fell Joseph, though he has not the least relation-



ship to Joseph the Bashful :—Notwithstanding his perilous situation he yielded to entreaty, though he foresaw and dreaded the inevitable storm. We performed much the same kind of jumbled incoherent entertainment as we had done on the first night. We had a full house on the Tuesday, and soon after supper that night my friend Joseph Austin set off with his lady for London, and left me behind to settle all bills, &c. for our private and public expenditure. My friend got to London in a whole skin, but too late for his part ; and indeed he had been so laden the week before with state affairs upon his head and shoulders, that had he been there a day sooner I do not suppose he had studied sufficiently to have known a sentence.—The lamentable consequence to Mrs. Bayes (or rather Dame Clive) was her being obliged to submit to change her new farce, or have an apology made for the part to be read—which I understood was kindly undertaken by Mr. Paeker, but am not certain. However the piece was unfortunately d——d, and the dreadful doom of it she attributed entirely to the neglective and audacious behaviour of that impudent Austin ; it enraged that truly comical lady (on the stage only) to the highest pitch of fury ; not Ceres with her torch set the fields of corn on fire with more eager fantastic fury than she would have at that instant.



sacrificed even the high-priest of the synagogue, Garrick himself, could she have dragged him to her altar of revenge; but “such divinity surrounds a king” that he escaped her vengeance by a secure and speedy retreat; and if truth may be spoken, I am inclined to think on this matter he was more indebted to flight than his divinityship for safety: as be it known, though our monarch Garrick used to be lordly and managerial over great and small, yet Dame Clive (like the Welch) was never subdued—indeed the great little man dreaded her. As an instance—I remember one night, while I had the honour to appertain to Drury-Lane theatre, *Lethe* was to be acted by desire of several persons of distinction: The bill run thus: *A dramatic satire called Lethe*—The new character of Lord Chalkstone by Mr. Garrick; and not any other performers mentioned, not even Woodward’s or Yates’s—Mrs. Clive’s part was the Fine Lady.—There were several actors of merit in the piece, but whether it had been printed in that manner by design or accident I know not, as play-bills published daily must be liable to errors, even though Mr. Kemble was the manager. Madam Clive at noon came to the theatre and furiously rung the alarm bell: for her name being omitted was an offence she construed so heinous, that nothing but vengeance, and blood! blood!



Iago was the word ! and it was no more strange than true that Garrick ever feared to meet that female spirit. Perhaps Mr. Cross the prompter might think Garrick's name was all-sufficient ; but her not seeing in the bill " The Fine Lady by Mrs. Clive," was so unpardonable an offence, that could she have got near him, and he had been severe in his replies, I dare say she would have deranged King David's wig and dress as adorned for Lord Chalkstone, which would have disconcerted him much. Mrs. Clive was a mixture of combustibles—she was passionate, cross, vulgar, yet sensible, and a very generous woman, and as a comic actress, of genuine worth—*indeed, indeed*, she was a diamond of the first water.—When her scene of the Fine Lady came on, she was received with the usual expression of gladness on her approach, as so charming an actress truly deserved ; and her song from the Italian Opera, where she was free with a good ridiculous imitation of Signora Mingotti, who was the darling favourite at the King's Theatre, and admired by all the *amateurs*,—she was universally encored, and came off the stage much sweetened in temper and manners from her first going on.—“ Aye,” says she in triumph, “ that artful devil could not hurt me with the Town, though he had



struck my name out of the bills." She laughed and joked about her late ill-humour as if she could have kissed all around her, though that happiness was not granted, but was willingly excused; and what added to her applause was her inward joy, triumph, and satisfaction, in finding the little great man was afraid to meet her, and which was of all consolations the greatest; not our brave Rodney could feel more pride or glory on the French Admiral de Grasse delivering up his sword to him, than Madam Clive did in the idea of her subduing Garrick. The valiant Boadicia never hurled her spear with more furor than Clive, that Amazonian Thalestris of Drury-Lane theatre, pursued that great general, Garrick, whenever he offended her; indeed the whole green-room dreaded her frowns. She was the original, and quite at home when in the *Cobler's Wife in the Devil to Pay*, and always proved that Poor Nell had a great soul; indeed, to those who approached her door in misery, she supplied their wants, and gave at once without pride or ostentation. Mr. Garrick alluded to Mrs. Clive in Nell, and Mrs. Pritchard in the *Queen in Hamlet*, when he wrote and spoke the following lines the season that Barry, Cibber, Quin, and Woffington, united forces at Covent-Garden—



Our ladies too, with hands and tongues untam'd,  
Fire up, like Britons, when the battle's nam'd :  
Each female heart pants for the glorious strife,  
From Hamlet's Mother to the Cobler's Wife.

So Madam Clive, of whom I have been speaking so long, when her farce was d——d, as she could nor start that Fox Austin from his hiding-place, at last found Mr. Garrick her darling prey, whose curiosity had led him back to take a peep at the field of battle, after beholding her farce and its fatal overthrow, and had exultingly sat smiling at the tumult, and enjoying the storm, which gratified his spleen ; and indeed her works, I believe, were truly indifferent, and would not have cut a much better figure in print than my own ; with this difference, she professed ability, I profess quite the contrary, cry quarter, and sue for mercy : Clive, like the good housewife, who sees a rat in the trap in the morning taken, no sooner espied him than she fastened ; and the furious poetess bitterly and vehemently harangued her manager as abetting and aiding in a plot to sink her works to oblivion, by being privy to Austin's having eloped, and thereby destroying her fame. The manager protested his innocence, nay acted great rage, denouncing severe and unheard-of punishments on Austin ; for certainly my friend Joseph being absent from his royal duty, and in a time of



war was not to be defended ; and what added to his crime in Mr. Garrick's eye was, that he had been with that infernal exotic, Wilkinson, to whom he never granted absolution. He d——d Wilkinson, he d——d Foote, and said, “ Lacey, I say, ecod we will have no more exotics at the theatre !” and concluded with a determination to discard Austin, for he was at that time really angry and offended with him, and much disapproved of his intimacy with me, as his jealous fearful temper suggested Austin (who was in full confidence with him) might give information now and then of “ The forbidden secrets of his prison-house :” He at length pacified Clive, convinced her he was not concerned in the plot, and hoped to see Austin afflicted with tortures for what she had suffered that night from his neglect, to which she attributed her favourite offspring being strangled in the birth. Mr. Garrick even soothed her into tolerable temper, by assuring her that her farce was one of the most entertaining and best written pieces that had been produced for years ; her own acting had charmed him, and he was mortified to think her misfortune in its disgrace was entirely owing to the unparalleled bad behaviour of Austin. Poor Joe was obliged to face his Master Garrick in a few days, and I believe received from him a very severe lecture, attended (I conjecture) with



a smarting fine: he was also for some time banished the court of Drury, and his Majesty of Denmark's presence; but luckily for cunning Joseph Mr. Garrick had interwoven his theatrical schemes and business so much with him, that Garrick found he could not, without inconceivable inconvenience, conduct his multiplicity of affairs without Joseph's transacting the secret services in the cabinet, for Cross was grown old, superannuated, and unfit for his office as prompter, &c.; and on weighing the scales with Austin in one and his darling Interest with the Rupture in the other, he found the balance was against himself; he therefore with quick and wonted generosity graciously restored Austin to favour at court, and reinstated him in all his honours and moveables of which he had been dispossessed:—For two years he was really a slave to him; nothing was right unless Austin was consulted; and, by way of amends, he would often honour him by publicly walking with him arm in arm, chatting, laughing, &c. with a small bribe for the day, and a large promise for the morrow; and I believe I may pronounce to a certainty, he never in all his life made Mr. Austin a genteel present or recompence for his trouble. I have mentioned this on guess, and if I am wrong in my assertion shall be happy to retract; for I would not advance a falsehood for



any advantage whatever, and Mr. Austin can easily in any newspaper contradict what I have asserted, and inform us of Mr. Garrick's generosity. Mr. Austin is an instance of one who sometime glowed under the sunshine-beams of court favour; yet with all his dependence on the great man in hopes of independence, he never could obtain his wishes and expectations; for, like the Miser, Joseph wanted to "to touch something real," but was only paid (as Ramlie) with forgiveness of all that had passed.

At length wearied out, Mr. Austin was under the necessity of leaving his friends and country, and seeking a refuge and asylum in Old Ireland: He never more returned to his old master Garrick.

Notwithstanding Mr. Garrick's oddities, I always did and shall reverence, respect, and esteem him as the greatest actor the British stage has ever known, from its first establishment to the present day: but in other points I have only given the picture as it should be, from the life, with all its spots, blemishes, and beauties; so my conscience may rest: as certainly, if my narrative respecting his treatment of myself be true, there remains no call of any trait of Mr. Garrick from my pen but justice.

In Dublin my old acquaintance Austin and I often met, and since that time as late manager of the



Newcastle theatre; but he has retired with ease and plenty—an enviable state! Whenever we do meet and want matter for conversation, we need but recollect Portsmouth, Mr. Garrick, Mrs. Clive, and others—and, as Lady Townly says, “We can make the prettiest sherbet; aye, and without too much lemon:” and to conclude with her ladyship’s words (as to Austin and myself) “I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.”

Mr. Garrick, though attached to subordination, was kept in order and decorum himself by our present ingenious writer, Counsellor Murphy; that gentleman could tease his soul, and gall his gizzard whenever he pleased or judged himself wronged. Mr. Macklin my master Garrick did not much love, though formerly they were on a friendly footing, but the Drury palace gates against his irony were fast closed. When *Barbarossa* (wrote by the late Dr. Brown) was produced, Garrick the first night entered after the fourth act in a glittering silver-spangled tissue shape; when Mrs. Clive, instead of court adulation, cried out, “O my God! room! room! make room for the royal lamp-lighter!”—which rudeness disconcerted him much for the remaining part of the evening; and certainly it was too free, and not well timed, as he was tremblingly alive all over on the first night of a new part in a new play; and it



certainly is a serious matter in London, and a service of danger.

Before I arrived in town from Portsmouth for Shuter's benefit, Mr. Arthur (manager of the Bath company) came to that town on the plan of building a new theatre there, as the inhabitants much wished for a better and more regular company of performers. Mr. Arthur waited on me, wished me joy on the success of my two nights public *impromptu* at Portsmouth; and as his friends, who had encouraged his new undertaking, wished to see me there again the ensuing summer, he hoped it would turn out mutually agreeable and lucrative to himself and me;—the matter was settled and agreed between us. He then made another proposal for my playing ten nights that spring season at Bath, with a clear benefit—that was also agreed on, and I left Portsmouth and got to London on Wednesday night, March 25, 1760, and on Thursday gave Tea, as I had promised, for my friend Shuter's benefit; and I may with great truth affirm with wonderful applause: The approbation intoxicated me so much, that the night following, being in company with Shuter and Ballard the treasurer, I consented to pour water on the leaves for his benefit early in May, though I had engaged for Bath, and knew I was to incur the expence from thence to London and



back again; but my desire for applause increased my thirst: it went down so deliciously, that I was glad to cover that as an obligation, which in fact I was pleased to be requested to do, and thought no price I could pay equal to public approbation. I did not then so well know the fickle changes of Fortune as well as life——Would I were young again!——But let it go—A foolish figure! farewell it.

I arrived at Bath well, and without the least fatigue; the next day I paid my respects to Mr. Arthur, also to Mr. Ridout, with a thousand compliments from Mr. Rich, who was unhappy at his ill-declining health calling him there, and obliging him to quit Covent-Garden theatre; to which place he never more returned. He was the only man in whom Mr. Rich placed any confidence, or whose advice he would listen to. Mr. Ridout being prime minister, he was of course bespattered with plenty of abuse; but he, like me and Benedick, cared not for a satire or an epigram:—for if a man will let himself be beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him.

Ridout was extremely glad to see me at Bath, and when my benefit was advertised he sent me a letter desiring three box tickets, and begged my acceptance of the inclosed three guineas, with his



best wishes and thanks for having so honourably kept my promise in 1758, not to meddle with his manner of acting any night of my imitations at either of the London theatres. The three guineas was meant, it is true, as a *douceur*, and I had some title to accept the cash and not return it; for I certainly had deprived myself of a credit as to the imitation; and I pin my faith more on Mr. Macklin's opinion than on my own merit: for Mr. Macklin when I last saw him declared I had taken such exact measure of Mr. Ridout, that my likeness of him was my master-piece. At Bath he died:—When I saw him there he appeared in a weak languid state, not in immediate danger——

But who can controul his fate?

I so fly-like (Mr. Aircastle myself) from one point to another, that I can apologize, but cannot help being incoherent.

Bath was then certainly a pleasing spot:—Now I am told, and it is well known, that city has increased at an incredible rate of elegance, to the astonishment and admiration of all Europe. In that city Mr. Keasberry treated me with my first dinner, and I was particularly lucky by unexpectedly meeting with an unthought-of blessing; for in a few hours after my name had been published for Richard the Third, I was surprised with the



agreeable pleasure of receiving cards from my ever dear remembered friends and patrons Mr. and Mrs. Chaigneau and Mrs. Forbes, and some others from Ireland—a most happy intelligence indeed for me, abstracted from interest. Bath was at that time, and still continues, a place of constant, fashionable, and friendly resort of persons of quality and fortune from the kingdom of Ireland: It was in truth a fortunate circumstance, as they immediately introduced me not only to a genteel but fashionable resort of friends, who were of the utmost service in fixing my reputation as a public performer amongst all the circle of their acquaintance, besides the certain allowed credit, convenience, and self-satisfaction on my Bath onset as an actor, to have such eligible and esteemed places to dine at, and be received as a particular friend and visitant at Mr. Chaigneau's in Gay-street, and Mrs. Forbes's in Queen-square, &c. I played a variety of characters there, and it would be tedious and fulsome to repeat the favours I received; every person I knew consulted to make me happy. My benefit was on Monday, April 27, 1761—Confederacy the play, with Tea and the farce of the Guardian—I acted Mrs. Amlet, and the Guardian, with Tea; and in the course of my playing I acted Richard, Lear, Hamlet, and Shylock—parts in the Minor, Cadwallader, Petruchio, &c.



My benefit was honoured with so great a demand for places, that the *whole pit was laid into the boxes*, a circumstance which had not been often instanced. A large party, with the late Lord Clive, were that night contented with places in the pit: Indeed a theatre is such a strange place, that the seat which is fashionable one night is horrid another; for sometimes if only the first rows of the side-boxes are taken the cry is, "Not a place to be had in the boxes; every seat is let!" The front-boxes, if Mrs. Siddons acts, are called good places, and acknowledged (as they truly are) to be the best seats in the house for seeing a play; but on any night, if not wishing to be at the theatre, and yet wanting an excuse to stay away, the cry is, "It is horrid—it is a bore.—Who can sit in the front-boxes? those giblets pies!"

When my nights with Mr. Arthur were expired I had engaged to perform Lady Pentweazle and Cadwallader for his benefit on Monday, May 4; but Mr. Ballard the Covent-Garden treasurer, (with Shuter's summons) advertised me in the London papers according to my promise, therefore I could not be excused, being so indispensably under an honourable contract to make my appearance in London, and was obliged to quit Bath on Saturday, May 2, and took post-chaise for the purpose. On Sunday noon I unexpectedly met a



party of friends at Hounslow, where I spent a cheerful day, and got safe to London in the evening, and was ready to fulfil my duty and promised faith on Monday night. Before I left Bath I had agreed to return the Thursday following, May the 7th, to perform for the benefit of Mr. Keasberry.

The Monday night I was in London I had not leisure to see any friend whatever, but was pleasing myself with the thoughts of what vast and uncommon applause I should be favoured with the next night: for my honey-draught on Shuter's benefit had been a great inducement for my incurring the expence of such a post journey. I have often heard Mr. Foote declare, that the change of weather had an effect upon the tempers of the audiences; and also to a certainty it acted differently with the performers as to their spirits, &c. The truth of these observations I cannot take upon me to determine, but leave it to the doctors and wiser heads; Every frequenter of a theatre must have at times been insensibly led to observe, that with the same actors, in the same piece, and in the same theatre, the reception, whether it was the weather, the audience, or their own dulness, has been widely opposite. If the audience is not in humour, the performer, let him go on in his best spirits, will flag; but on the contrary, if the



audience is in great good humour, and the players flat and insipid, they will catch the fire like electricity; and though the performers went on the stage even in bad health and spirits, they will be transformed and all alert, forget their illness, be *new vigoured*, become what each wishes to personate in the assumed character——

Each bosom's lord sits lightly on its throne,  
And all that night an unaccustomed spirit  
Lifts them above the ground with cheerful thoughts.

So I on the day of Ballard's benefit, like Mrs. Heidleburgh, longed for the rencounter, and was as usual well received; and I was determined to get applause by giving much more in quantity than what I had done for Shuter's benefit—an ignorant zeal, that, like Shakspeare's Dogberry, had it been ten times more, I would have bestowed all my tediousness on their Worships. But alas! alas! before I had gone half a stage with my *comic lecture* my numerous auditory appeared to be sleepy and tired. Now, whether it was as Mr. Foote had observed the weather, the drowsiness of the audience, or from what other chain of stupidity, I cannot tell; but I rather believe it was owing to a jumble of bad materials, with a double quantity of my own insipidity intermixed. One circumstance I remember perfectly, which was, I



thought it would never have been over without Supernatural Aid, or a ghost to tell me so—and I am certain my hearers thought so too. But as it is often said, “It is a long lane that has no turning,” so at last the conclusion did come, and two or three friends at the lower end of the hall gave a hand or two, the upper part of the building I believe gave a different kind of token; therefore I did not take the vantage of those few at the lower end, and stay to cry, “Thanks, gentle citizens and friends, &c.” but even then took off and made my exit.

Ballard's benefit was composed of all sorts of the lower order of people from every distant quarter of London, the greatest part of whom perhaps did not see three plays in a year, and my imitations were as little understood by the red-cloaked ladies in the front-boxes as when I gave Tea at Norwich; in fact it was as Hamlet says, “*Caviare* to the multitude.” So I (poor Pilgarlick) had treated myself with a post-chaise jaunt of one hundred miles from Bath to London, and to return back; and all for a bill which my vanity had drawn upon the bank of Folly, the which had no stability, and was not fit to be trusted, as it was protested and returned back on my hands to my own shame and disgrace: This is true—but not



without a good lesson for young people's improvement and future observation—and I consoled myself with never in future playing at hazard for the chance of applause only, without the pecunia, where there were such odds against me. I returned to Bath, and was on the stage on Thursday, May 7, on Mr. Keasberry's night, and when there, had plenty of Spaw-water, very easily purchased, to quench my thirst for applause, when I wanted more than I deserved:—Not but the longing desire of applause is a good incentive to excite spirit and emulation in every young performer; for without ambition few would encounter such various and almost insurmountable difficulties as attend a theatre. I remember Miss Nossiter's saying in the green-room, that all of the theatrical profession should be blessed with more than common philosophy: That we should possess that said serenity I agree to be a right observation, but am far from thinking we are in any great degree honoured with its attendance as a constant companion; in general we have something like an equivalent, and that is great spirits, which glides over little misfortunes, evil tongues, and disappointments, easier than with mankind in general; and good spirits create ease and happiness, and, like death and the dice, levels all distinctions——



Else who would bear the whips and scorns of the time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
And the spurns that patient Merit of th' unworthy takes ?

While at Bath I was solicited to perform for almost every benefit ; I most willingly complied, and acted away most furiously without fee or reward, so was in no danger of suffering on the vagrant act.

The two last plays were Hamlet and Richard the Third: the first for the benefit of Mr. Williams, (termed the *Ancient Carpenter*) on Friday, June 5, 1761 ; and the last, for Mr. Wooley the painter, Monday, June 8.—The farce was *Hob in the Well*, in which Mr. Wooley appeared in the character of *Hob*.

The reason for my being so particular as to the days, months, and years, on trifles not worth doubting is, that it helps as a reference to the professed plan with which I set out, and to make good my assertions with those now living, who might think it worth while either to corroborate or contradict my relation of facts with the strictest observance of time and place.

From thence I lounged at Winchester until the new theatre at Portsmouth (building under Mr. Arthur's inspection) was ready for the reception of the Bath Company, at that time under his direction, where I resorted according to beat of



drum and marching orders on the 1st of July; but when I saw the desolate state of the building, I judged it impracticable for its wide extended walls to have a play enacted that good year of our Lord: However Arthur was indefatigable; slow, and sure; and in so short a time as Monday, July 20, *Hamlet* was announced for opening our new theatre, with the farce of the Contrivances—Hamlet, Mr. Wilkinson; Polonius, Mr. Arthur; Horatio, Mr. Keasberry; the Queen, Mrs. Lee.

Mrs. Lee was wife to the late Mr. Lee, and mother to the present Miss Lees of Bath: One wrote the pleasant comedy of the Chapter of Accidents; and the other that entertaining and well-drawn romance of the Recess. Mr. Lee was well known in London as an actor of merit at Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden, also as manager and performer at Edinburgh and Bath. But some dispute had happened about a year before I was at Bath between Mr. Lee and Mr. Palmer, (the Bath proprietor) which not being amicably settled, Mr. Lee withdrew; but she very sensibly (not having given any cause for complaint) desired to be retained.

Our new grand theatre at noon, on the 20th of July, had not the least appearance of being fit to be opened that night, either before or behind the curtain—the whole company were of that



opinion : But great men will overcome obstacles, and the wonder-working incomparable Arthur despised difficulties. At twelve o'clock at noon there was not one seat in the pit, but he actually contrived to get it finished by seven. Not any rehearsal was possible, as the stage was up to one's waist in shavings. The populace were eager to see the new playhouse, new company, and the first acted play ; but on traversing the streets from four till seven, and no admittance, they became very noisy, the sailors particularly unruly ; when into the street popped our old cross commander in chief, Admiral Arthur—not like his advertised character of Polonius, but more resembling one of the witches in Macbeth ; for he had on an old round flapped hat, a woman's checked apron, with a large broom in his hand, and his face as begrimed and greasy as a barn-acting Othello in the Dog-days : He harangued the multitude, high and low, and humbly beseeched their patience while himself and the hard-laboured carpenters assisted in sweeping the shavings out of the pit and gallery : He received a good hooting with a laugh, and retired to make his words good by deeds, and Hecate-like he sweated and swept most violently, till the word without was given, as their impatience was beyond bounds ; the doors were burst open, the witch and her stick were thrown down and rolled



over and over; the broom had no other charms or spells than to assist the cripple to hobble out and escape with all possible expedition; there were no persons ready, or offices fixed to take the money, so each sailor and his lass, or his companion and others seated themselves in such places as suited their fancies. But Arthur to shew his humbleness acted as a wary and careful manager; for, without putting off his apron, as soon as the house had filled and all were a little quiet and seated, in the midst of a cloud of dust he doffed his old brown hat, and went profoundly round the theatre to collect in it from every part what he could either by threats or civility obtain: some did pay, others did not, and some only what they pleased; nor would he have stirred till twelve at night whilst he beheld the glimpse of another dropping shilling to have paid for their forcibly-obtained footing. When he had finished that difficult job he retired to what was absolutely requisite, soap and sand, and in about an hour more (the hour of nine) we proceeded on with our solemnity. Mr. Arthur was transformed—a long old periwig and a sumptuous suit of clothes gracing his person for Polonius (a part which he had often performed in London, and acted truly well); but the lamps and candles having been loaded with the immensity of our kindred dust from Hecate, (the ma-



nager's outrageous sweepings) had occasioned such a mist and violent heat on the audience-part of the theatre, on the stage, behind the scenes, and had dispersed such an universal melancholy gloom as I never can forget :—every one of the performers, and the well-warmed (nay I may say nearly parched) spectators became reflectors of burning heat to each other, and were almost literally scorched on that night's dangerous undertaking. For my own part I judged I should make my exit as a great man, being no less a personage than the Prince of Denmark ; and recollecting the old women's adage, that *a man must swallow a peck of dust ere he dies*, I concluded my time was come, as I by my own suggestion fancied I must that night have gulped that fatal quantity :—however it is evident I survived that suffocation. In three or four nights after, our little theatre was really an elegant, well-approved, and fashionable place of resort ; far different from what the families of Portsmouth had ever *then* experienced in point of grandeur, comfort, or regularity ; or as a respectable company of comedians.

Indeed I do not suppose Mr. Arthur would have opened the theatre in this strange, inconvenient, and contemptuous condition, but from a particular circumstance, which was, that the 20th of July led on to the Portsmouth annual mart ; a week of



general resort for all sorts of people that assembled yearly to purchase toys, ribands, flippets, &c. therefore had he lost that advantage, he would have missed the capital prize in his theatrical lottery. It was still the time not only of hostility with France, but an honourable, successful, and as glorious a war as any the British annals can boast;—though as to war at Portsmouth the creed of the inhabitants is easily understood by the words of Kate Matchlock in the Funeral, who says, “O rare news! we are going to have a war, and a war’s a war, no matter whether abroad or at home.”—So in fact *war* is the only manufactory of Portsmouth and Plymouth:—And of course that war continuing added much to our good fortune, and was the happy work of more lucky chances. We were soon opposed by the old Plymouth company of comedians at the old theatre, the ragged regiment I have so often mentioned; but their theatre was so dirty, their conduct so irregular, that they were generally viewed as a vulgar dram-drinking set when compared to our decent demeanour and truly creditable appearance; therefore we were honourably termed the *quality company*: Our house had many advantages, not only as to elegance, but was more commodious and cool; with good wardrobe, scenery, &c.



My night was on Monday, September 26, and was greatly attended ; as a proof I believe it was the best in our whole successful season. *Tamerlane* with the *Upholsterer*.—I acted Bajazet, the first scene of *Sir Archy*, *Bucks have at ye All*, with *Pamphlet* and *Razor*.

Our campaign ended without any particular occurrences on Monday, October 19, 1761, with *Henry VIII.* and the *Coronation* : It was acted two nights after the benefits were over. *Wolfey*, *Wilkinson* ; *Gardiner*, *Arthur* ; *Cranmer*, *Keasberry* ; *Henry*, *Stephens* the button-maker (once famous as *Othello* in *London*) ; *Anna Bullen*, *Miss Reynolds*, late *Mrs. Saunders*, who acted the *Country Girl* when it was altered at *Mr. Garrick's* desire some years ago by *Mr. Bickerstaff* ; *Queen Katherine*, *Mrs. Baker*.

*Mrs. Baker* was a woman of strong understanding, aided by a good and highly-finished education, wonderful natural abilities, and an actress of great capacity, and she had performed three or four parts at *Covent-Garden*, where they could not deny she possessed much merit ; her features were very good, but her figure was short, clumsy, and against her in many parts, which otherwise she was well calculated for. If a line had been drawn of competitorship, the first of that or the present day would have shrunk in the debate as to com—



*prehension* and real understanding, and yielded to her courtesey. Use is of greater importance than the London or any other audience are aware of.—Mrs. Pritchard was a striking instance, who, with a large figure, was esteemed the best Rosalind, though Mrs. Woffington, the beautiful, was her opponent.—Prejudice for some time prevailed much against Mrs. Baker at York, where she acted during the races in August 1768, and one winter 1769; but at the latter part of the season she surmounted those prejudices. At Edinburgh, where she resided some years, she was in universal esteem as an actress: but on a quarrel with Mr. Digges (for her temper was soon ruffled, and she was too apt to rush into the different extremes of love and hate) she hastily quitted the stage, and there undertook the difficult task of teaching the English pronunciation; for which she was not only capable but thoroughly qualified: In so doing she received great promises, (and what was better) great emoluments, all which increased instead of being diminished. She was received as a guest of knowledge and entertaining lively conversation at the first tables in Edinburgh, which honours, at that city, would never without talents have been conferred. Her last performance at Portsmouth was in Queen Katherine.

The coronation to Henry VIII. had double effect.



from being well timed ; his present Majesty King George III. having been crowned on Tuesday, Sept. 22. On that day most of the Hampshire world assembled ; for those that could not be in London flocked to Portsmouth, and there beheld at noon a glorious fight indeed ; several of our noblest ships of war dressed in their colours, all the officers of their separate denominations decked out in their full uniforms, and every person, both high and low, in their holiday clothes :—whilst all the cannon from the ramparts and shipping, as also from the castle on South-Sea Common, were echoing and re-echoing resounding thunder, with such a delightful confusion of noise, (as Sir Callaghan O Brallaghan says) that I can no more attempt to give an account of it than to tell the stars in the sky. That heavenly fight was greatly heightened by the additional illumination of Apollo, who had mounted his fiery steeds, and the sun beamed most brilliantly, and hailed one of the most auspicious and splendid days that ever blessed our nation. Almost every reader knows that the prospect from the ramparts at Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight is one of the most delightful in the kingdom. The coronation being the general topic added not a little to curiosity and attraction for our Henry VIII. on that evening ; and the play was highly approved by a full audience.



I must not omit before I quit Hampshire to mention, that early in August 1761, Mr. Lee had hired a banditti set of actors to perform at Winchester every Saturday for a few weeks, a camp being there, but far inferior to the encampment I before described the preceding year ; but I agreed on such nights to accompany Mrs. Lee, he paying the carriage for two days, the Saturday and Sunday, and to have a clear benefit ; which engagement he punctually fulfilled, but we differed about some trifle and did not part friends. Mr. Lee was very fond of teaching to act, with which he amused himself from Saturday to Saturday with almost as thin a company as Gibbet's in the Beaux Stratagem—I am sure it did not double it.—The salaries the reader may be sure were poor, as Winchester with the little camp could not afford great expences so as to procure Mr. Lee a living, and the additional charges of my going there with Mrs. Lee ; yet Mr. Lee being known as an actor of merit, the officers were pleased and obliged to him for their Saturday's lounge, and made it a point to do all in their power to support him.—Mr. Lee would not lead off the first play—I believe he was really afraid, his spirits being dashed, as whose would not ; like Falstaff, who says, “ If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a foused gurnet.”



The first play was on Saturday, August 8, 1761. There was not any thing appeared to Lee to be so practicable as my doing the parts in the Minor, so the Minor was fixed on without any other entertainment whatever; and it was acted from necessity in a very mutilated state, as it was impossible the people Mr. Lee had so suddenly and with difficulty collected could be perfect in the intermediate scenes where I was not concerned: However a very genteel house appeared of Mr. Lee's patrons, and I was well received as their old favourite acquaintance, having been there a whole campaign the year before with the Bath company; so from consideration to Mr. Lee and myself, they went away in perfect good humour, professed themselves pleased and satisfied with their short entertainment.

August 15, we acted the Fair Penitent: Mr. Lee had amused himself with drilling his troops, and the play had one great claim to being well received, as it was very perfect. Lothario, Mr. Lee; Horatio, Mr. Wilkinson; Lavinia, Mrs. Burden, who had acted Charlotte in Love A-la-Mode at Covent-Garden, and the lady I have so often mentioned as the *infernal limb*; Calista by Mrs. Lee. The farce was Lethe—The Old Man and Lord Chalkstone, Mr. Wilkinson; Frenchman, Mr. Lee.



August 22, Jane Shore. Shore Mr. Lee ; Hastings, Mr. Wilkinson :—With a scene from Taste as the entertainment ; Lady Pentweazle, Mr. Wilkinson.

August 29, The Way to Keep Him. Love-more Mr. Lee ; Bucks have at ye All, Mr. Wilkinson : With the farce of the Author : Mr. Cadwallader, Mr. Wilkinson.

September 5, (By desire of Lady Harriet Conyers) The Provoked Wife : Sir John Brute, Mr. Lee ; and for the farce Mr. Wilkinson will give Tea.

September 12, (my last night) Romeo and Juliet : Romeo, Mr. Wilkinson ; Mercutio, Mr. Lee. With Bucks have at ye All, and the favourite scene of Sir Archy Mac Sarcastm from Love A-la-Mode—to a very noble audience, which may be easily accounted for, not only as a reward for the trouble I had undergone of performing, added to the journies, but from my established acquaintance with the gentlemen of the army, as well as with the particular inhabitants of Winchester the preceding year. After the hard duty I had sustained of marching and counter marching from stage to stage, and the business universally heavy on me at Portsmouth garrison, no wonder if I wished to indulge a few weeks autumn repose, with that best good physician my mother, who



was certainly not only my truest but most agreeable friend. After a few days rest I visited my old master Mr. Rich, who had some weeks before ordered Mr. Ballard the treasurer to write me a letter of invitation, and that I was expected by his manager to be in London by the 20th of September, the opening time of the London theatres, with an offer of 6l. per week, and to be ready in the character of Bayes, and to sign an article for three years, benefits included in the proposal. My engagement with Mr. Arthur, rendered a compliance (with honour or any degree of honesty) impossible. My non-attendance much offended Mr. Rich, as he thought (and very justly) he had made me a very genteel and comfortable offer; but after I had two or three times attended his mornings levee, we became as good friends as ever. He even condescended to request a favour, which was, that I would make my first appearance in a farce, which he told me secretly in confidence, was of his own writing; and I have reason to believe it was, and that it will not be eagerly contradicted or claimed on account of its bequeathed honours to posterity. It was called the Spirit of Contradiction. He said, if I would but act the part of the Gardener from his *larning*, it would make my fortune, *provided* I would implicitly yield to his instructions. I had by that



time grown so familiarized to Mr. Rich's oddities, that I unfeignedly held him in great regard and esteem, and in the true sense of the word, believe he was a worthy and respectable gentleman; for tho' I well remembered he pronounced a very unfavourable opinion of me some years before when I was really distressed, yet in our after serious acquaintance I often experienced many acts of kindness, good wishes, and cordiality, which fully made me amends, and my former seeming ill luck had made me often read the book called Experience. Too often neglected in all stages of life, for the prevention of errors which lead to misfortunes.

When I spoke of the Gardener for Mr. Shuter (who was the Edwin of the time) instead of myself, he took his snuff, stroaked his cat, and said, "If I give it *Musther Shuttleworth* he will not let me teach him, and he is so idle: I want it perfect *Musther Williamskin*; but I will larn you *Musther*, if you will play the part from my tuition.

We were one noon, hard at work with the part of the Gardener, when Mr. Younger the prompter abruptly came into the room on urgent and immediate stage state-affairs, Rich perceiving him, turned hastily about, and in a rage said, "Get away *Musther Youngmore*, I am teaching *Musther Whittington* to act." If questioned why I have spoken of Mr. Rich so respectfully, yet draw such a caricature? I an-



swer, my obligations to him at first were not those of a good kind, that I altered my opinion, by having notions superior to prejudice, and as a true drawing of character, without giving tints of these oddities, strangers would have no true notion of Mr. Rich's real manner and personal oddities: And I wish every writer, good or bad, never dealt in more satire or intention of doing harm than my insignificant self. Indeed Mr. Rich's peculiarities are not here observed as a novelty, for his best friends then, and those who now remain cannot but say the relation is not more whimsical than true.

When I had undergone six days lessons, and repeated the Gardener line by line, and to the best my ear could conduct me, Mr. Rich said, "No engagement with his *larning* me, unless confirmed by an article signed for three years." Now I had been so weary of Mr. Garrick's tyranny, and above all loved to ramble, and was so habituated to get money and be my own master, that I could not by any means relish the least idea of bondage; for being at liberty (exclusive of the profit) seemed doubly pleasant and alluring. So in short, after a pause, with hesitation, and finding I could not gulp down an article, I frankly told him my disposition; but that I was notwithstanding at his command, on his profered terms for



ten weeks only; whereat my old master grew angry, I turned fullen, and our interview concluded as follows:—

*Mr. Rich.* So you will not sign your article *Muste Williamskin*, and let me *larn* you?

*Mr. Wilkinson.* No, Sir—Articles may be repented on both sides, and I would rather agree for a shorter term, and renew, if mutually agreeable.

*Mr. Rich.* Why then, *Muste Williamskin*, what will you do? for *Muste Griskin* (Mr. Garrick) told me in the summer he would *never* engage you again; you have offended him *Muste*, and he will never forgive you; and *Muste Williamskin*, you did not attend my theatre when summoned, and I not only made you a liberal offer, but endeavoured to be the making of you by *larning* you to act.

*Mr. Wilkinson.* My good Sir, I am truly obliged to you for your offers; but must repeat, I do not relish a confined engagement—Rather than be under an article for three years, I would prefer rambling for six; therefore, good Sir, with my sincere thanks and wishes, unless you will agree for ten weeks, I mean to set sail in a few days for Ireland.

His astonishment and answer I shall never forget, though his prophecy was not in respect to myself verified, yet I have reason to fear some adventurers



possessed of too much faith in promises, woefully experienced real disappointment.

*Mr. Rich* [sternly.] *Musther Williamskin*, I'll tell you what will be the consequence of your headstrong ignorance; you will go over to Dublin, and engage with the tall man, *Musther Barlymore*, he will promise you a large salary, of which you will not receive a second guinea; for that *Musther Barlymore* can wheedle a bird from the tree, and squeeze it to death in his hand\*. *Musther Williamskin*, here is five guineas as a ticket for your Irish benefit, that you may be sure of something. I wish you a good journey—your servant. He left the room in a pet, and the five guineas in my hand; and though I was no lawyer, I was not so ignorant as not to retain the fee, and that was my last visit and conversation with the *really good Mr. Rich*. He died soon after, during the run of his splendid coronation.

The day before the fracas happened, I had received a letter of pressing invitation from *Mr. Mossop*, then manager of Smock-Alley theatre in Dublin. That unexpected treaty could not have been brought about after *Mossop's* declared aversion, had it not been for the willing interference of *Counsellor Barrett*. That gentleman had a

\* This was a severe caricature of *Barry*, but shrewd and too near a resemblance.



strong partiality for Mr. Mossop, as a friend and an actor; they had been bred I understood at college together, which lasting intimacy induced Mr. Barrett to be ever ready to contribute towards conciliation and acts of kindness; for the which, I doubt he suffered very considerably (tho' willingly) by frequently encroaching on his own substantial finances to the generously assisting Mossop with material sums at times when bewildered, and plunged in his fatal airy scheme of being an opposing manager, which too frequently occasioned various occurrences and disasters at different periods; for which generous benevolence, I fear the friendly hearted Counsellor never had a chance or possibility of being reimbursed: however he was affluent, and did not want money, but the distressed actor unhappily did. I relate this from conjecture only, never having been on a footing of intimacy with Mr. Barrett to enable me to vouch for its authenticity, though infinitely obliged to him in Ireland, in 1760, for many civilities which I am ever pleased to acknowledge; likewise his being instrumental to the bringing me and Mr. Mossop on terms of amity once more in 1762: but that governour of restless players was not by any means blessed with a tythe of Mr. Barry's pleasing abilities as an actor, or generous qualities as a man or manager. Mr. Barry had certainly



a most enchanting fascination beyond the general lot of mankind; as a proof, it was seldom either creditor or *enemy* left Barry in an ill humour, however in other respects dissatisfied or disappointed. Mr. Mossop was overloaded with a quantity of combustibles, consisting of pride, insolence, arrogance and gall. I reviewed the difference as to the respective managers; but Mossop's offer claimed a priority of preference, as being the first, and that offer was liberal. The reader will think it strange that Mossop should have any engagement with me after his declarations; but he judged (I suppose) it was better policy to keep such a mischievous monkey in his own theatre, where he might play his tricks at the expence of the enemy, than suffer pug to be at the opposite one, and be let loose upon himself. He wrote me word I might depend on every friendship in his power, to render his theatre agreeable; and insinuated, that after his generous presentation he trusted I would not deal so unlike a gentleman when I arrived in Dublin, as to enter or listen to any terms whatever as to engaging with Barry and Woodward, which I assented to. On my arrival Mr. Mossop and I soon settled all preliminaries, it was early in January and a few days after Christmas holidays. My first appearance was in the *play* of the Minor, (which two years before



had been damned as a *farce*): it would have been hazardous; but its being insinuated and advertised with a pompous account of the amazing run and success it had met with at all the three theatres in London, not omitting to mention considerable alterations, which by so doing obtained a verdict in favour of seeing and hearing it acted. And as Mr. Foote has been mentioned to have observed the difference of weather, humours, and various accidents that make for and against to render it impossible to account for the uncertain changes in theatrical events, so the Minor was acted to a very fine house, received with universal applause, and continued to be performed twice a-week to good houses.

My imitation of Mrs. Bellamy (in Shift), with the Introduction, the Puppets, and a Mock Burletta Imitation, &c. were of great service. The Minor was well supported, as may be perceived by the following cast.—I acted Mr. Foote's characters; the Minor, Mr. Jefferson; Mr. Wealthy, Mr. Sowden; Sir William, Mr. Baddely; Loader, Mr. Ryder:—Lucy, Mrs. Kelf. In that theatre I met with my agreeable friend, Mrs. Abington, in high estimation; she did not see her old friend Tate with a new face. She had grown weary of being connected with Barry and Mrs. Dancer, as the latter could not relish the triumph of



Miss Notable, nor could Miss Notable patiently submit to the insolence and affected superiority of Mrs. Conquest. My agreeable acquaintance Mrs. Kelf, now Mrs. Egerton, with her mother and sister, were at Mossop's theatre; and if this book falls into her hands, she will laugh very heartily on recollecting the many happy days, and whimsical adventures which occurred that winter in dear Dublin. Whenever I remember the happiness I there experienced, and the numerous obligations I received in that city, I sigh and languish for another peep, ere I depart to meet my many good friends of great Britain and Ireland which have gone before me, to that country *from whose bourn no traveller returns.*

Mr. Mossop and myself, for the first three weeks, were on the most intimate footing. I dined twice with him at Dr. Wilson's apartments in Trinity College; he was a staunch friend of Mossop's. (I believe the Smock-ally theatre was Dr. Wilson's property.) These dinners, I surmised, were intended to induce me, by their mutual rhetoric and persuasion, to attack Barry and Woodward; but that I declined from policy. For I prophetically judged it most likely that this sudden apparent friendship would not be of very long duration, as I knew in his heart he hated me: so the foundation which I depended on his good will was very



weak and frivolous ; and when he wanted to be quit of me, I should have shut Barry's doors against my sweet self. However I proposed, over our claret, to take great pains with Woodward's favourite character of the Barber, and he might advertise my name for it in the manner of the original, which seemed to please Mossop much ; a plain proof how we relish satire against others, and how little we allow for it against ourselves : It was immediately brought forward.

The next day after being with Mr. Mossop, I waited on the attractive Abington, and importuned her assistance in Termagant, which she good naturedly complied with. She was at that juncture of time in her full bloom and prime of life : she has had her day—Miss Farren now has her day ; and she, I hope, will live like the French beauty Madam Ninon de l'Enclos, who captivated her son by her charms when she was at the age of seventy.

I told Mrs. Abington I should revive the Jealous Wife for my night, if she would favour me with playing Mrs. Oakley, she consented to study it against the 22d of February. Indeed she, that winter, as well as in 1760, paid me great civilities, and I never received a favour in my life that I was not grateful for, and ever ready and proud to acknowledge. It was surprising that so truly good a comedy should have been in print



two winters, and not brought forward properly at either of the Dublin theatres. We acted the Author three or four nights, and it was commanded by their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland; his Grace was at that time the Lord Lieutenant. The Upholsterer was often repeated, and I was esteemed so very like Woodward in the part, by my having so exactly copied his manner and dress, that I do not believe Colley Cibber's relation of his likeness of Dogget in Fondlewife was in truth beyond my exact representation of Woodward in the Barber. Lady Pentweazle also helped to make out my twelve nights, with the repeating the successful comedy of the Jealous Wife, in which I acted Mr. Oakley. That year, early in March 1762, both the tragedy candidates Barry and Mossop, had fixed on performing Othello on the same Monday, for their benefit play. Mossop relying on his novelty, Barry on his long-established reputation; the partisans prepared for battle, bets ran high and furious as in the present days for pugilism. Mossop's holder of the stakes was the Countess of Brandon, heavy in demeanour, but alert in apprehension. Her ladyship solicited his Grace the Duke of Northumberland, to command Mossop's night, to which he generously assented; but wisely contrived to occasion a cessation of hostilities between



the two combatants, by promising to Barry, that provided he would postpone his night to the Tuesday, he would also command that evening's entertainment, by which means the town would be kept in good humour, the particular friends of each rest satisfied, and, his Grace also added, he should (by such attention and compliance from Mr. Barry) not be deprived the pleasure of seeing him in his favourite character of Othello, which always afforded him the highest satisfaction.— Barry of course complied, and was not inwardly displeased that the critics (without a division) would have such an immediate opportunity to compare notes on the skill and superiority of the declared opponents. On this remarkable occasion, each house was equally thronged, though Barry's on the Tuesday was the greatest receipt, as Crow-street, was capable of containing more than Smock-alley; otherwise party zeal added to curiosity, raised auditors in such super-abundance as would have filled Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden theatres. As to victory, Barry's Othello was so meritorious as to make Mossop's viewed at a distance only; he was as much superior in the valiant Moor, as Mossop would have been to Barry in Richard or Zanga. I sat the evening of Mossop's benefit in an upper box, where a lady, who sat next me, exclaimed on Mossop's first appearance, with



an archness and humour peculiar to that nation, "O! faith Mossop has got two eyes in his belly?"

This shrewd remark was occasioned by his wearing a heavy embossed shape, (fit for Brutus or Cato) a dragon's face on the breast, with two large glaring red stones for the eyes, his face and wig being black, conveyed exactly what the lady had so ironically expressed. Mr. Barry, though masterly that night of controversy, had frequently shewn himself to more advantage, merely owing to his then taking too great pains in his favourite and much esteemed part; which proves, that lucky accidents fortunately combined with nature will perchance strike out more beauties for an artist than all the most determined force of premeditation.

Mr. Mossop that year had an Italian opera company, which was of infinite service to him, but astonishingly hurt his own consequence: for what with parties and other diversions of routs, assemblies, concerts, &c. with which Dublin in the winter abounds, and opposed by the forces of Woodward and Barry (for they still maintained their fashion and good report) the great box nights were chiefly confined to those of the burlettas. That agreeable singer and actress *Signora De Amicé* was the principal, and was almost adored; she after that greatly succeeded at the opera house in London, as the first serious woman singer.



These Italian comic operas were all the rage, and were supported at the following prices:—boxes, pit, and lattices, 5s. 5d.—middle gallery, 2s. 2d.—upper gallery, 1s. 1d. Dublin was then torn to pieces by the perpetual application for one theatre or the other; it was reduced quite to a party matter. The Countess of Brandon would not be seen at Crow-street upon any account, but attended constantly at her dear Mossop's. Barry, I believe had at least converted the ladies two to one in his favour. Barry's making love, when on the stage, left tender impressions; but yet this play-begging at last grew troublesome, and ended with fatal circumstances, of which an exact account has before been given.

Mossop, when he had a good house, instead of endeavouring to extricate himself in any degree from his multiplicity of difficulties, grew desperate, and instead of paying either his tradesmen or performers, flew to the gay circles, where he was gladly admitted; and in order to mend his broken fortune by the chance of a die or the turn up of a card, of which I believe he was ignorant, and unacquainted with the necessary arts to succeed. He has often left the theatre with a hundred guineas in his pocket, and returned home with an aching head and heart; but his guineas, with debts of honour, were all left behind. The Coun-



tefs of Brandon ferved him greatly it is true; but often the money fhe occafioned being paid at the theatre returned to her own coffers. This was the univerfal opinion of Dublin, and is all I can alledge in that cafe as to its authenticity; and, as to Moflop's poverty, there needs no evidence for that unfortunate reality.

This conduct, and a train of evils attendant thereon, foon preyed upon his health, involved his talents with himfelf, and gave bitter fours to that temper which was, in its natural fource, far from being one of the beft. An inftance of the poverty his performers were reduced to in 1764 I will, with permiffion, relate.

The Diftreffed Mother was to be acted—Oreftes, Mr. Moflop; Andromache, by Mrs. Burden (whom I have fo often mentioned.) The falaries had not been paid for feveral weeks, and fhe was in true character as the diltreffed *woman*. With infinite difficulty fhe forced access to the General Moflop; for it was hard to accomplifh admittance on account of many inconvenient reafons, unlefs on a Sunday, and on that grand levee-day performers and tradefmen were too menial to be admitted. But with the force of a heroine, who dauntlefs furmounts all barriers and tyrants at will, fo Mrs. Burden burft into the “inmoft recess of his prifon houfe,” and when arrived at the royal hall, fhe was as determined to preferve character—for



at the awful voice of Mossop she, Andromache-like, was prostrate at the feet of her royal master, and uttered forth in tragic tones, "O! Sir, for God's sake assist me, I have not bread to eat, I am actually starving, and shall be turned out into the streets."

*Mossop.* (*In state.*) Wo-man!—you have five pounds per week, wo-man!

*Mrs. Burden.* True Sir: But I have been in Dublin six months, and in all that time have only received six pounds.—I call every Saturday at the office for my salary—but no money, is the answer: besides, Sir, your credit and your honour is at stake; how can I play Andromache, the Trojan Queen, without black satin shoes?

*Mossop.* Woman, begone! I insist on your having black satin shoes for Androm-a-che. And, wo-man, if you *dare* ask me for money again, I will forfeit you ten pounds, wo—man.—So ended that real tragical scene of penury and pomposity.

My benefit that year, Feb. 22, 1762, was as usual, very great indeed, it could not be better. My play (as before related) was the Jealous Wife.—Oakley (with a prologue of Garrick's) Mr. Wilkin-son; Major Oakley, Mr. Baddely; Lord Trinket, Mr. Jefferson; Charles, Mr. Reed; Ruffet, Mr. Heaphy; Sir Harry, Mr. Ryder; Capt. O'Cut-ter, Mr. Sparks:—Lady Freelove, Miss Kennedy; Harriet, Miss Macartney; Mrs. Oakley, Mrs.



Abington: With Tea, Bucks have at ye All, and the farce of the Country House.

My engagement with Mossop being expired, I intended soon leaving my old favourite spot, which was now become a home; but was detained by Mrs. Abington's requesting I would stay and assist her in a scene of fun and humour for her benefit night, which she had complied with at the request of her really good benefactor Lord Miltown. Mrs. Abington, had often entertained several genteel parties with some droll stories of a good gentlewoman she named Mrs. Fuz. I had been on parties with Lord Miltown and Lord Clambrazil, when in high spirits and good humour, and had diverted myself and the company with stories and anecdotes, of my dear, favourite, old lady, Mrs. White, of whom the reader must by this time have formed some idea, by referring back to what I have before related of my darling old gentlewoman's singularities.

Mrs. Abington had promised Lord Miltown she would produce herself as Mrs. Fuz, and she would prevail on her friend Wilkinson to do the same, as Mrs. Jenkins (alias Mrs. White); which information his Lordship made known to all families of distinction in Dublin: but the peer did not reflect, that those stories told by myself or Mrs. Abington, over the convivial table gave a kind of explanatory key to the strange characters;



and Sir Francis Delaval and Mr. Foote knew the mother and the daughters, as well as myself; but on a stage where few of the audience were acquainted either with the character that Mrs. Abington or I represented, the joke was as difficult to find out as Mr. Bayes's laughing violently at his own Prince Volscius, where the joke lay in the boots.—Her play was *Rule a Wife*—Leon, Mr. Mossop; Copper Captain, Mr. Brown:—*Estifania*, Mrs. Abington. Between the play and farce, an interlude called *Mrs. Jenkins and Mrs. Fuz*. Mrs. Jenkins, Mr. Wilkinson; Mrs. Fuz, Mrs. Abington. Before the night came, we often entertained ourselves with extempore rehearsals, and conceived ourselves easy, perfect, and entertaining. Mrs. Jenkins was dressed before the play concluded. Mrs. Abington, after an epilogue of shrewd turn, and spoke with great point, retired to dress as Mrs. Fuz; our dresses had been before well considered.—It was a crowded house; part of the pit laid into the boxes. Mrs. Abington had ordered an excellent supper, superbly lighted, &c. and had wrote a little introductory dialogue-scene in the street between two gentlemen, giving a description of a party they were that night invited to, and where two extraordinary characters were asked for the entertainment of the lady's guests, at whose house the rendezvous was appointed; but each person was en-



joined to lay their fingers on their lips, and not to laugh on any account whatever, but to pay every mark of attention and approbation, in order that the two ladies might with more unlimited freedom display their different absurdities. After the dialogue was finished, the scene was drawn up, and discovered several well-dressed ladies and gentlemen at supper:—Miss Ambrose was sitting at my elbow as the daughter of Mrs. Jenkins, who intended bringing her on the stage:—Mrs. Fuz was seated at one front corner of a long supper table, and I was at the other: Mrs. Kelf was at the head as lady of the ceremonies, which was the only good part, for there were the servants with wine, and she displayed on the occasion her being mistress of a good knife and fork. On being discovered, and looking scornfully at each other, our two figures had for some time a fine effect; loud fits of laughter succeeded, and from these great expectations were formed.

Mrs. Fuz then desired Mrs. Jenkins to begin—Mrs. Jenkins desired Mrs. Fuz would do the same—and we found ourselves in an awkward situation: But after a few efforts the two ladies entered into a hobbling short conversation, which was received very well, from the eager opinion that something better would follow, for the audience were all eyes and ears; but we soon flagged: Mrs. Fuz asked for a glass of wine—says Mrs. Jenkins, *upond my sould*



and I will have a glass of *wind* too. Then Mrs. Fuz said, when she was first married her two *breasteses* were so large, you might have carried a plate of salt upon them:—That did not do, and the Abington began to feel it a service of danger, perplexity, and disgrace.—Mrs. Jenkins called to her daughter to act Juliet, and observe her manner, and to stick herself upon the stage as if she was chilled and stabbed *throfout*: But as she kneeled down to act Juliet, the strange old lady, Mrs. Fuz, got up, gave her a kick, ran away, and abandoned Mrs. Jenkins to the mercy of the audience; I was well aware of what might be expected, and therefore lost no time, but arose and ran after her, crying out, “Mrs. Fuz! Mrs. Fuz!”—The audience began to smoke the joke, and by their tokens of anger gave the necessary hint to the staring ladies and gentlemen on the stage, that a retreat would not be imprudent if they regarded their safety; so they ran away also, which caused a laugh; for it was evident when Mrs. Abington and I had eloped, they were ignorant what to do, not knowing but that we meant to return, for they were only desired to stay on till we finished, which the performers could not conceive would be so abruptly as we made it, but expected us to come back and make a conclusion to our characters.



I hope Mrs. Abington has not forgot this, but will laugh at it as I do; though it was truly awkward at the time, and it really drew Lord Mil-town into disgrace, for he had said so much in favour of the promised scene, that it had been the conversation of the preceding week.

When the curtain dropped, which was with loud marks of censure, the ladies universally arose, and, by way of joke, laughed and courtesied to each other, saying, "Your servant, Mrs. Jenkins; your servant, Mrs. Fuz!—which I dare say vexed his Lordship much, not only for his own and the disappointment of the audience, but more so, as any failure of Mrs. Abington's was mortifying to him; for he was then, and I am told is now a most violently attached and true patron and well-wisher of hers. Mrs. Abington, in her epilogue after *Estifania*, had spoke some lines very sarcastically aimed at Mr. Woodward; who, to speak truth, deserved it at her hands: they were very severe, and her being so great a favourite, and delivering them most excellently in Woodward's manner, stung him to the quick. Indeed he was so much irritated by her arch exhibition, that it put a stop to my intended sail for England, and was the occasion of an intimacy between him and me; as till then it had so happened that I had never met with, spoke to, or hardly seen Mr. Woodward,



but in his profession on the stage. He directed my old acquaintance, Joseph Austin, to call on me, with an invitation to supper the Sunday night following my great performance, united with Mrs. Abington's, which I could not refuse, as I had an impulse, I may add, to be acquainted with a gentleman of such merit as an actor, and a worthy and valuable character as a man.

Mr. Austin introduced me on the Sunday evening, and supposing secrets of state were not to be divulged, left us to a roast fowl and mince-pies, with the help of two bottles of claret to grow wise and intimate; for with an Englishman the second bottle is absolutely necessary for those purposes, though I know by long experience not so salutary for the health. Mr. Woodward paid me the compliment of saying he wished to be on a footing of intimacy; hoped I would become his real friendly acquaintance, and make his table my own while I remained in Dublin, when at leisure or not particularly engaged; and further said, at that time he kept not any company, for the manner of living in Dublin was too free—— Mrs. Woodward was on her dying bed, and a friend in that situation would be his only comfort, pleasure, and satisfaction, to pass away a dreary hour.

From that night we formed an acquaintance, and he offered me twenty guineas for play-



ing four nights, and a clear one for my benefit. I urged with truth that I feared a second benefit would fail, especially as I had been honoured with so many great ones, and that my friends in particular would not like it, (which was really the case). Woodward urged in palliation, that was his reason for offering me twenty guineas, and he would not advise me to trouble or think of my friends attendance, so lately called on, but inform them I did not expect their appearance again on that occasion: and added, as you are on the spot you had better continue five or six weeks; and if the receipt is but indifferent, it will be taking so much without trouble: This seemed feasible—I liked Dublin—and as it suited my inclination, and was practicable, I consented; and I believe we had a third bottle as a signing the contract. Woodward, I must observe, was a sober man to a degree, not fond of parties, but liked to chat with a friend; and over a bottle he would often stretch a point. I was enlisted once more in the same regiment with Joseph Austin:—The first night I played (there was a very fine house) Kately, in Every Man in his Humour; which character, from some cause or another, had been wanting from the two seasons of Mossop's departure; Bobadil, by the *only* Bobadil of present memory, Mr. Woodward; and with Buck in the English-



man returned from Paris, &c. made out the four nights, but not within the time I was engaged: As his wife's death kept him some weeks off the stage, and greatly retarded my intended expedition, and by that serious intervention drove my benefit till the 25th of May.—The play was *The Tender Husband; or, The Accomplished Fools*:—Numps, Mr. Woodward; Sir Harry Gubbin, Mr. Wilkinfon; Captain Clerimont, Mr. Dexter; Biddy Tipkin, Mrs. Dancer.—With a paltry piece of stuff I called *The Auction*; wherein I was the Auctioneer: My friend Joseph, always ready to assist, acted a part called *Lady Toothless*:—In which interlude we gave a specimen of the French Harlequin Comedy, with what wit Master Tate and Master Joseph could bestow on their good-natured audience, not much to our credit; but we escaped to the full as well as Mrs. Jenkins and Mrs. Fuz.—The Farce was *Thomas and Sally*: I acted Dorcas as an Italian, and really with good reception and success; my broken English and imitation of foreign manners were so preserved within proper bounds, as I may pronounce of myself was tolerable, and at the finish spoke the exact words, and in the manner of Signora De Amicé, the greatly followed Italian singer of that season at Smock-Alley theatre, which had a catch of quick applause and laughing approbation.



“ Me am sorry, me am extremely sorry me cannot speak better Englis :—Me return my sincere tanks for dis grat a favor :—Me vould vish bettar, much bettar vords to exprefs my gratitude.”

The evening finished with great laughter, but the sum total I received was only 28l. some odd shillings. I must not forget a particular circumstance which happened that very night at the conclusion of the *Tender Husband* ; all had gone on smoothly till the end of the comedy, when on a sudden even Woodward was planet struck—not one could proceed—the audience hissed—Woodward crossed the stage to me, and authoritatively chid me for not speaking the tag : I said *he* was wrong, and disclaimed any knowledge of a line more in my part. I spoke to Mr. Dexter—Mr. Dexter to Mrs. Dancer (now Mrs. Crawford), and with disgrace the curtain dropped : and after each person looking on the other, like searching for one’s knee-buckle in a hurry, which at the same time is often where it should be ; so we, on inspection, found the last speech and tag belonged to Mr. Dexter, who was a very perfect actor in general. But the same misfortune has been known in London to have happened : for when it comes to the tag, as we call it, of a well-known play, we at rehearsals, like careless people at church, begin to move off before the blessing is pronounced ; and from



that omission in the morning it begets inattention, and we fall into the pool of disgrace at night: So when the book was produced, it told in glaring letters that Mr. Dexter was the defaulter. Now, says the reader, where was the prompter? Why, my good Sir, or Madam, when players come to what we call a stand-still, they are then dumb-founded, stupid animals, and cannot say *bo*.—We are not always the wisest of mankind, nor yet quite so ignorant and vulgar, as we are sometimes honoured by the kind estimation of too many: and be it observed and remembered, that accidents will happen in the best governed families.

Another odd theatrical adventure happened at that very time: Mr. King, who was as great an established favourite as I ever remember in Dublin, (not even Woodward excepted) not having been in Ireland from the spring 1759 till that of 1762, Mr. Garrick had given him leave three or four weeks before Drury-Lane closed, hoping he would have obtained fine gleanings in the month of May, by visiting his Dublin friends and admirers after an absence of three years. Great expectations were formed, yet the attraction failed, and on his benefit in particular, which was the Monday after mine; for an influenza had seized men, women, and children: I never was worse with any illness than at that time. Austin and I



were in the middle gallery on his benefit night, when I do not believe there were twelve persons there besides, nor much more than 141. in the house, even though Mr. King played Bayes in the Rehearsal, and had to change his dress between two or three of the acts, for he spoke Bucks have at ye All ! and acted in Mr. Garrick's Interlude of the Farmer's Return from London, and had his abilities, assisted by a very good company, as may be seen in the bill of the Jealous Wife.

Mr. King's good sense will not be angry at this recital, for it is an instance of the power of fashion, more or less, in every place : But when Mr. King, a few seasons after, returned, the people were not so unwitted ; for on his being advertised to appear in Lord Ogleby, it was with the utmost difficulty a seat could be obtained, not only for his first night, but several succeeding ones ; all ran in crowds to see their old favourite Tom King every time he performed, though a very bad set of players to assist him.

Dublin is remarkable for doing a great deal for the actor, or nothing ; and if one particular part by a performer happens to please their fancies and judgment, once a week to the end of the season it will fill the house. The winter 1788, in November and December, he performed with as high spirits and more profit than on any



preceding he ever made there ; and was so carested and esteemed by every one, that they were not contented when his first engagement was finished with the manager, and therefore he agreed for twelve nights more after Christmas, which was equally beneficial with the first : and the Irish hospitality was such, that it is well he got away with safety ; for wherever they esteem, they are apt to endanger the healths of their guests with acts of kindness. He then went to Scotland and performed four nights at Glasgow, (which run in regular progression, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) and each night to an overflowing house. On the Saturday he travelled forty-four miles from Glasgow to Edinburgh, where at six o'clock there was not a seat to be had in any part of the theatre, and at seven o'clock he was on the stage receiving the warmest welcome from an audience, pleased to see not only so excellent an actor, but a gentleman whose own natural good qualities were superior (or at least must be allowed equal) to his abilities as the player.

Owing to the influenza having confined me for some few days, and not having any engagement confirmed either in Ireland or England to call me from Dublin, I did not depart, though my engagement finished on the 25th of May. Wishing for a little country air, I requested my friend Austin



to dine with me at one of those pleasant villages with which Dublin is romantically and delightfully surrounded. At our return, on entering the metropolis, I accidentally cast my eyes on the plaistered-up play-bill, and, to my infinite surprise, read "The Orphan: Castalio, Mr. Barry, &c. and between the play and farce Mr. *Wilkinson* will give TEA: After which, Mr. Macklin's Love A-la-Mode." I thought it very strange, unprecedented, and rude behaviour, my nights being expired, and my time delayed, that Mr. Barry or Mr. Woodward should improperly advertise me for what I was not then prepared for at their territories, and that done by one or both without a line or message. I felt myself angry and hurt, and declared I would not attend the theatre, but Mr. Austin perswaded me much not to abide by that resolution: He urged, that the managers had acted rather cavalierly, but judged it much more advisable to avoid offending my friends or the public, or even the managers; we might meet again: it was always better to be on terms with those leaders in power; and he did not doubt but they meant to pay me some compliment. To this friendly admonition and advice I not only attentively listened, but obeyed its dictates, went to my lodgings, dressed and prepared to give some jumbled performance at the playhouse: when there,



I complained of the ill behaviour, which the graces of Barry soon made easy, and prevented me from permitting rage to fire my bosom. When the Orphan finished, and Barry had, as the unhappy husband of Monimia, departed to the imaginary shades, I in a few minutes informed Mr. Carmichael the prompter, that I was ready to give the whole house Tea, tho' without cups and saucers; but just when the curtain was drawing up, the said Carmichael came in a violent hurry and told me he came with peremptory orders from Mr. Barry, that I must not on any pretext whatever attempt to proceed with my part of the entertainment for the evening until the end of Love A-la-Mode, and that Mr. Macklin insisted on that injunction being complied with.

Mr. Macklin was ever tenacious of his favourite offspring, and he judged, I do conjecture, that any delay or laugh *immediately after* the tragedy from the audience might in some small degree take off the relish when Love A-la-Mode began. However I persisted, that if I obliged Mr. Barry with doing what he had not the least right to command or expect, I would, unless I was then permitted to perform, instantly quit the theatre: To that declaration Barry did not pay much attention; and as he was ever intimidated by Mr. Macklin, and tremblingly alive and fearful of his



desertion to Mossop, the mortal opponent of Crowstreet citadel, of course neither my petition nor remonstrance could prevail; and I, as obstinate as either, not only left the royal army under the command of the master revellers, but, instead of going home, retired to Mr. Acheson's, a private and worthy family in Trinity-lane, where I was assured not any pursuers would ever dream of finding me; or indeed if they had, I should not have returned.

After inquiring as to the termination of the evening at the playhouse, I was informed that all went on smoothly; the piece received the tribute due to its merit, and Macklin, Barry, Woodward, and Messink a repetition of approbation which their respective merits had so frequently obtained: Not one of the three leading personages had cast a thought on Wilkinson, nor did they suppose he would be called for; or if he was, that a slight apology from the manager of Mr. Tate's departure would settle all matters amicably.

But the event proved much to the contrary; for when the farce finished, and the audience were judged to be departing, on peeping through the curtain a few minutes after their supposed *exeunt omnes*, they were all espied in dread array, and as regularly seated as they had been viewed the hour preceding; and on neither



preparatory music giving the elevating sound, nor Mr. W. making his expected appearance, from a murmur a violent clamour ensued, when speedily Mr. Barry stepped forward and informed the large assemblage the whole matter; that Mr. W. it was true had been there, but for what reason Mr. B. could not divine Mr. W. had as unexpectedly as suddenly eloped: however, that would not in the smallest degree pacify them; they judged their rights infringed, and their authority much imposed upon, insisted on my being sent for, and said they would sit patiently till I attended and fulfilled my duty—but all the messengers' search was fruitless—and, indeed, had it been otherwise, and they had found me in my hiding-place, I should not have returned to have endured the wrathful resentments and disgrace I certainly had not deserved and must have suffered, but, snail-like, would have pulled in my horns, and kept snug and secure within my shell. For the manager certainly, (as I was not engaged then to him) had not the right or the power to act as he did; and I, forewarned of the displeasure I had incurred, had prudently determined I would not venture my sweet self again in their field of battle that year of our Lord. On their patience being exhausted, and Mr. Barry's assurance of the various means taken to recover the lost sheep, the whole blame fell (as was likely)



upon poor Tate, and the departing guests, one and all, pronounced great punishment on my devoted head whenever it next popped before them; and declared to the manager they would not miss any opportunity to treat me with a dish of *their tea* in lieu of my own. All this vexatious, unlucky matter, with various ill-natured and increasing additions, the next day or two much perplexed and distressed me, the more so as I was not without visitors, who in general condemned my conduct, nor would yield to my being in the right, even admitting the other party to have been ever so wrong:—For they observed, as my engagement was finished, I could effectually have prevented any future mistake of the kind; and even if what I intended to present to the public had lost some trifling applause, or had not been relished by the audience, it was not to be balanced **against** the almost certainty of offending many, if not all of those to whom I had been so constantly obliged; and indeed it must be granted, though I was favoured with many partial friends, I should with deliberation on the other hand have considered that I was not without numerous enemies—many deservedly so—who would assuredly rejoice at such an open opportunity of relating it greatly to my disadvantage. Now, as to who was most in the wrong, my different readers must determine. Not that I ef-



caped entirely without punishment, as in the year 1764 I experienced an unexpected and whimsical retaliation, which will be truly related in its proper time and place in this falmagundi dish of all sorts prepared by Mr. Garrick's exotic. The important subject very soon ceased, and was put a stop to by the sudden appearance of Mrs. Pritchard from London, who never had been in Ireland, and was engaged on large terms to perform a few nights with Mr. Barry: Her long established fame, her excellent private character, and universally acknowledged worth, gave rise to wonderful expectation. Notwithstanding such a combination of good promise, and that she made her first appearance in one of her favourite and best esteemed characters, that of Lady Macbeth, in which she was perfectly suited as to the figure, manner, voice, execution, and judgment, yet the experiment was tried at too late a season of her life; she never drew a *second crowded house*—the bloom was off the peach; and in general (but in Dublin more particularly) an accomplished beauty only can be almost assured of victory; she with merit may slay hearts at will, and, like Bobadil, call twenty into the field of love, kill them; twenty more, kill them too: nay more, in Ireland, a new-born Venus like Mrs. Sullen, may say, "O! a fine woman may do any thing in Dublin!—O my con-



science ! she may raise an army of twenty thousand men !”

But I will leave the worthy ancient lady, Mrs. Pritchard, and attend on myself ; who, after the late fracas at Crow-Street Theatre, left the Grecians early in June 1762 ; and when at Chester was induced to lounge there about eight days, and formed an acquaintance with Mr. Daniel Smith and Mrs. Smith, of the White Lion Inn : He was one of the most spirited, friendly, and entertaining characters I ever met with ; hundreds are judges of the individual I am speaking of.—Like other men that have merit he had envious enemies, but they were so overbalanced by friends and great and deserved success, that such opposers made the following line applicable to him.

Their praise was censure, and their censure praise.

He was, on my first intimacy, in his prime of life, of an intrepid manly disposition, strong and happy in health, attended with great liveliness ; not a gentleman of Chester, or the county, but liked Dan Smith as a companion.—To him I owe several acquaintances at Chester, whom I reflect on with pleasure, as well as the many happy days I have had there, for Smith’s house was at all times my home : not that I accepted his favours without a return. His and my intimates were Roger Wilberham, Esq; Mr. Farrington, Mr. Fisher Tench, Mr.



Orme, &c. I was so delighted with the first civilities which I experienced from Mr. and Mrs. Smith, that it was actually with the utmost regret I could leave them:—however, business must be adhered to, and after a mutual promise of a continuance of friendship so agreeably begun, I took my leave, and determined on going to Birmingham, where I had never been, and where my good friends, Mr. Hull and Mr. Younger were as managers for the summer season. I took a post-chaise, and on the second day arrived there to dinner:—It was quite a new scene to me.—The company had acted three or four weeks, and I intended my visit to Mr. Hull for seven or eight days only. Miss Morrison, Mr. Moody, and several performers from London, with whom I was well acquainted, were there:—they wished for my continuance, provided I would accept the terms of the company, which was a share and a benefit: to that I consented. I was not engaged at any other place, and it was particularly agreeable to my own inclination.

On the 28th of June, Alexander was acted:—To which was added, The Minor.—I performed the usual characters.

The following paragraph Mr. Hull put to the bottom of the bill:—



“ The company, in order to render their performances as generally agreeable as possible, have engaged Mr. Wilkinson for the ensuing part of the season; who will occasionally entertain the public with several characters in Mr. Foote’s manner, and with various imitations of burlettas, operas, &c. as they have been repeatedly exhibited in London, with universal approbation.”

My mother’s letter to me at Birmingham.

“ MY DEAR TATE,

“ YOURS of yesterday makes me extremely  
“ happy that you feel no remaining effects from  
“ that violent night’s overdoing your strength; that  
“ you are in favour with the town, and also that  
“ you are at this hot time free from hard work in  
“ tragedy. I am vastly delighted that you have  
“ the pleasure of so fine a country, and with such  
“ a multiplicity of engagements with the people in  
“ high life: only, as you observe, it is living too  
“ well, which I hope will be carried off by fine  
“ air and your riding. If you go to Worcester,  
“ very possible you may see Mrs. Hutchinson  
“ there, at Mr. Broomley’s a man of fortune. If  
“ she is not at the races, and you have time,  
“ Whitley-Court, at Lord Foley’s, is but a few  
“ miles, which visit would reinstate you in her fa-  
“ vour. As you are so near the spot called Tato



“Heath, it is very right to think about what in-  
“quiries are to be made about it: then in the first  
“place you are to take the advice of some person  
“of good character, eminent in the law, whether  
“your father did not, after his conviction; forfeit  
“all his rights to any thing he had from the  
“Crown? I remember that was Mr. Sharpe’s  
“opinion; and if so you can have no claim: but  
“if upon further inquiry you should be better in-  
“formed, your right as from your father would be  
“very easy to prove at the Duchy-Office. It was  
“the year forty when your father was at War-  
“rington, and all the papers I have relating to  
“the coals were signed by John Baily, who, if  
“alive, could inform you particularly where the  
“coal-pits were.

“How could you be at a loss to know whose  
“kitchen I meant? her ladyship’s: who I believe is  
“as much distressed to support that family as ever  
“I was in one far less. Lord Forbes has been  
“dangerously ill; upon which news the Captain  
“set out post for Dublin; and whilst I was there  
“yesterday, letters came from him and Mrs. Wilson  
“of his safe arrival. I most sincerely wish them all  
“happy, but returned home blessing God how  
“much more true ease, content, and satisfaction I  
“and my son enjoy; for really, as far as I can  
“judge, you are now in a round of engagements



“ of all the pleasures this world can give; your  
“ way of life here so different, I do not know how  
“ you will reconcile yourself to the change. My  
“ desires are contracted in a narrow sphere—a  
“ mind in peace, with the decent necessities of  
“ life. I hope by your enlarged acquaintance you  
“ may meet with those who will prove real friends,  
“ and be of service to you upon many occasions,  
“ as your men of fortune carry weight in every  
“ way of life. And so to hear of your continued  
“ health and spirits will ever give the highest joy  
“ to the heart of

“ Your most affectionate mother,

“ G. WILKINSON.”

*London, August, 1762.*

Wednesday the 25th of August, The Rehearsal  
—the first time I ever acted Bayes.

The company was summoned by Mr. Yates to Preston on account of the jubilee, which is kept there with great festivity, and celebrated every twenty-one years:—he had engaged several principal London performers. I returned back to Chester, being eager to see my friend Smith and family, and other new acquaintance at that place; but I made my journey thither a pleasant round, and took Preston in my way: I met Mr. Sowden coming from Ireland on the road, and he turned back and went



with me to the Jubilee, and then to stay with me a few days at Chester. At Preston we found very bad accommodations, very dear, very dirty, and much crowded. The procession was tolerable, but not worth the trouble or expence of a journey to see it; indeed I was very glad on the second day to persuade Mr. Sowden to quit Preston for Chester, for it was all confusion and mire, except the main street, which I recollect is spacious and handsome, but it was the crowd and incon-  
veniency that made us glad to depart; and we went from thence to Liverpool, where I had never before been; and after one day's view we crossed in the East Ferry to Cheshire, where we ordered a post-chaise, and got in good time to dinner at Chester.

Mr. Sowden's intimacy with me began the winter before at Mr. Mossop's theatre, where he was a sub-manager at that time. He was a sensible shrewd bred man, looked on in general as remarkably insincere; not that I ever met with any thing from him in any respect, but the opposite conduct. I once went with him from Dublin to Wicklow (a pleasant ride) to receive some rents there: He was very entertaining, and a great epicure: He was possessed of an ample fortune, the consequence of being a good economist, and well knowing how to lend his money to great advantage, yet not



without good security : He made himself generally pleasing, as he never contradicted any body, or disliked any thing at another person's table, but always approved. If a gentleman had said, " Sowden, that cabbage-leaf those strawberries are on is a fine leaf?" he would have sworn a loud oath, that the cabbage-leaf not only was a handsome cabbage-leaf, but, by G—d! the handsomest cabbage-leaf that ever grew. He was father to Mrs. Jackson at Edinburgh, and I believe she only came in for an inconsiderable part of his fortune ; but of that Mrs. Jackson is the only competent and proper judge ; and I sincerely hope my conjecture may be quite wrong for her sake.

From Chester I went to London, where I had not paid my dutiful respects for several months, and there had a welcome not to be suspected. From thence, for a few nights, I paid a visit on the eve of the peace being settled between France and England, to my brandy company of the old theatre at Portsmouth ; the Bath commander had left that place for his regular winter quarters : ships of war were sailing daily into the harbour to be paid off, consequently money was plenty, and the theatre well filled. I had not visited my friends for a full year, I was therefore a kind of novelty, besides having attained a supply of new characters. The 20th of October, 1762, I acted Lear, also



Bayes, &c. and finished with a crowded benefit and well-pleased theatre. I have often wished once more to walk those ramparts, and take a retrospect of my juvenile part of life, so frequently employed on that spot where I was then so highly gratified with friends, pleasure, and credit; whenever opportunity offers, I will indulge myself for a few days with that trip. From Portsmouth I returned by the road through Salisbury to Bath, where I expected without doubt an engagement; but there my vanity or my hopes, call it which you will, were frustrated as to the theatre. Mr. Arthur thought I asked too much, and I, that he offered too little; in consequence thereof Mr. Simpson of the great rooms obliged me with them to exhibit in; and actually I had, to a jumbled, ill-conducted medley, at 3s. per ticket, not less than 60l. and I was at very little expence, Mr. Fleming leading *gratis*; in short, the night was universally fashionable, and every body was willing to serve me, which easily accounts for any success of that kind however wonderful it may appear. It actually had such general sanction, that the theatre was so deserted as to be obliged to be dismissed for the want of an audience on that evening; an instance perhaps never before or since there, within living memory. I had a second night on Thursday, Dec. 16, and very genteely



attended, 35l.; it was much better conducted and approved, and would have been more lucrative had my first been more properly considered.

From thence I went to Bristol, where I had never before been, and on Tuesday, February 1st, I had a most brilliant and crowded audience, at the assembly room, in Princess-street. Mr. Fleming assisted me again as leader, and gave his Quaker's Sermon on his violin; for which he was much admired and applauded, and was truly a worthy man, and universally esteemed; he was father to the Miss Flemings now of Bath. I returned the compliment in a small degree by once performing for his benefit at William Wiltshire's rooms on the 28th November, 1764, at Bath; but he assisted me twice there, and twice at Bristol.

I was much obliged to the ladies and gentlemen at Bristol for their general patronage, and their kindneses shewn me on those nights, as except Mr. Church at the White Lion, Broad-street, Bristol, I did not know even the names of three people in that opulent city, my whole time there was entirely confined to Mr. and Mrs. Church. They behaved with great kindness to me, as I was very ill under their care in a fever near three weeks.



To Mr. CHURCH, at BRISTOL.

“SIR,

“As I have not had any letter from my son  
“since Wednesday se’nnight, that he was then ill,  
“I am under great anxiety of mind, concluding he  
“is worse, and if so beg you will let no attendance  
“or advice be wanting; and that if he is not able  
“to write, I beg the favour you will be so good as  
“send me a line by return of the post; for if my  
“son is (as I greatly fear) ill, I will upon your  
“answer, set out for Bristol. I beg you not to  
“fail writing as to a mother whose earthly happi-  
“ness is placed in the life and health of her only  
“child.

“I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

“G. WILKINSON.”

*London, Feb. 4, 1763.*

“Please to direct for me Half-moon-street in  
“the Strand.”

On my recovery, from thence I returned by Bath to London, for a few days recreation, and then set off on an invitation I had received from Mr. Ivory, manager of the Norwich theatre; so there was another new trip. Mr. Hurst (whom I had known in Ireland) was appointed the directing manager, and I believe was the occasion of the offer. Mr. Hurst I had often met in my ad-



venturing (as Garrick termed it) and his behaviour at Norwich was kind and attentive to a degree both as to my profit, when my benefit was to be fixed, and in every other particular. In return I really underwent infinite labour; for he worked me not as an horse of blood; but as an horse for burthens, I even now sink at the very thought of how I drudged and toiled in that theatrical Norwich mine.

On Monday, February 29, 1763, I played Othello; on Saturday, March 5, the Minor. Mr. Bannister, senr. was there, and took his first ideas of mimicry from seeing me play those parts in the Minor, Cadwallader, and other of Mr. Foote's pieces. My playing in the Minor drew *repeated* and *increasing* good houses. This may appear as a stretch; but Mr. Dodd was there, to whose services I have been much obliged at York: he was a reigning favourite at that time, and I call on him to vouch, that tho' the city of Norwich is not the most theatrical town in the kingdom, yet that audience to any piece that is well received will bear a more repeated acting of it than any other town of the size whatever. I think the Padlock was acted twenty-five nights the first season; now, that to be accomplished from its production there with only four plays, or but three in a-week, I look upon to be equal to fifty times in London.



Norwich season was then five months. I acted Bayes four play nights progressively—Saturday, March 12, Monday 14, Tuesday 15, and Thursday 17. The Rehearsal was much liked, though not calculated for any audience “to pit, box, and gallery it” out of the meridian of London, Dublin, Edinburgh, Bath, or York. Prince Volscius, was acted by Mr. Dodd, and the present clever Mr. Bannister played the grave sententious Mr. Smith; the Gentleman Usher, Mr. Weston, who had not then acted in London (and was not in any degree of eminence as a comedian.) I do not believe, take it for all in all, that Norwich ever had a better company than that identical season; Mr. Chalmers was there as a comic actor, and I fear I speak truth when I say, I verily believe he was a greater favourite than Weston; he was father to Mr. Chalmers with me at York some seasons, a young man of merit and a very good harlequin.

I will here mention that an adventure of mine, related by Mrs. Bellamy in her sixth volume, relative to Mr. Chalmers the comedian, of Norwich, passing for Wilkinson, the York manager, is no more than strictly true, however vague, romantic, and improbable it may appear to a stranger. I have been often taxed as to its authenticity; but the following persons are still inhabiting this earthly



globe, and must remember the transaction mentioned—Sir John Sinclair, Mr. Woods, Mr. Bland, Mr. Moss, Mr. Death, Mr. Beynon, Mrs. Webb, Mr. and Mrs. Charteris, Mrs. Inchbald, and others, were all then at Glasgow, and subscribed to assist the strange Mr. Chalmers at that time. The day I met my friend Socia Wilkinson, at Hollytown, was on Saturday the 16th of April, 1774. But as that matter is not in the least relative to my adventures at Norwich, and lest I should stray until I am bewildered, I will get back to that town, and inform the reader, that after being cordially and partially received in several principal characters, my benefit night there was fixed on Monday, April 11, 1763. I had been lucky to a degree in having the honour to please the inhabitants of Norwich, and almost every part repeated again; also the farces were approved, and Bucks have at ye All, there was no end to. I played at my benefit, King Lear, and promised to treat all the ladies and gentlemen with TEA, which was seriously taken by the people in general as a contract they expected would be fulfilled: it was thought very expensive, and would be attended with much difficulty and trouble; but Mr. Wilkinson was vastly genteel, but then how would he be able to find cups and saucers for such a quantity of people? Why, to be sure, the quality folks



were to be served first, then a fresh washing of the china, to be humbly presented to Tom, Mary, Darby, and Joan, in the galleries. What I am describing is more serious than will be supposed credible, and however unlikely, though it is the strangest, it is not the only instance of the kind with which my readers shall hereafter be made acquainted. I have the pleasure to say I was myself much pleased at the very great compliment paid me; as at the usual prices from that time to the present there has not (I have been given to understand) been ten such crowded houses seen at Norwich in the tedious round of twenty-seven years. In short, the town was in a mob at three o'clock in the afternoon, to secure a first seat if possible to see Mr. Wilkinson and drink a Dish of Tea with him. The interlude given that night as Tea, was the same kind of mixed entertainment, consisting chiefly of the imitations of those actors, and the same materials which had been so greatly received in London, Dublin, &c. and with which the reader has been pestered from the first volume of this complex—*what d'ye call it*—*something*—*nothing of a book*; for the work will certainly be allowed originality, and that no such hurlo-thrumbo production as to information of jumbled matter and anecdotes ever before appeared! What is more extraordinary than the strange



mistake which arose in the peoples' ideas, should not only have been taken as seriously offensive at Norwich then, but it actually laid the foundation for fabricating a thousand stories, and Fame increasing as she goes, told the tale with wonderful additions to the children of that time, and remembered by those young ones who then could not lisp ; yet they can now relate what their daddies told them of me, (Wilkinson) who promised to give all the town Tea, and behaved so ill, he would not keep his promise, but made a joke of it.

On eagle's wings immortal scandals fly,  
While virtuous actions are but born and die.

It was soon after my departure circulated, and even put at length into the newspapers (which must be true) that I was obliged to secure my personal safety by flight, that I ordered a post-chaise with four horses, took all the money which had been received that night into a large silk handkerchief, without waiting to count if all was right, and got out of Norwich with all expedition, lest I should have been torn in pieces by the enraged multitude ; and when I arrived in London, they said Wilkinson laughed at the Norwich flats, and an hundred ridiculous falsehoods of that kind were propagated, and handed carefully down by that generation and piously transmitted to their children. Now the



plain matter of fact was no more than by not satisfying them really with the eager expected Tea, the thirst for which was so great that I verily believe had Mr. Garrick been King Lear they would have thought the play had been too long; but when they found no Tea, they did not relish what I was doing as the way by any means to make them amends for the insult they supposed I had wilfully given to their understandings; but what was more, my likenesses of Mr. Barry, Mr. Sparks, or any of the London performers was Greek to them; and it was natural for them not to admire what they could not by any means comprehend. The difference of audiences in such like circumstances is amazing. A farce, if it possesses true humour, in London will be greatly relished and applauded: In the country very possibly the same (even decently acted) shall be termed vile, low, vulgar, and indelicate. The Love for Love of Congreve, the Trip to Scarborough, the Way of the World, the Confederacy, and others, are in London attended to as plays of wit and merit, (witness their constant repetition) but in the country not permitted, or if permitted to appear, not upon any account fashionable, which is just as bad.

The same unlucky reception of my Tea at Norwich, would happen to the ablest imitator in London, supposing he gave the strongest likenesses



of the Edinburgh and York actors ; a London audience so tried would feel not only chagrined and disappointed, but would give such tokens of resentment and anger, as would far exceed that of the enraged Norwichers. My farce that night helped to confirm my disgrace ; for out of London certainly no one was so very likely to displease as Mr. Foote's Orators, not only quite obsolete but local : let any person now take it up of the age of twenty-five, and it will puzzle the best head to find out or comprehend how at that time, even in London, an audience could possibly be entertained by it, however well acted. The porter-club, the last scene of the farce, gave it a complete overthrow, though assisted by Mr. Weston ; their patience was quite exhausted, and I could barely make a finish. I dare say no lady can feel this account more forcibly than Mrs. Wells ; for without being on the spot to judge as a witness, and though surrounded by many friends, and even the royal support of majesty, she found, I dare guess, a material difference between giving her imitations of Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Crawford at Covent-Garden theatre, than before the best collected audience at Cheltenham.

As Peter Paragraph in the Orators that night, I only recollect a few nonsensical lines of Mr. Foote's, not printed, which he always spoke, and occasioned a laugh. The character was drawn



as a likeness of Mr. Alderman George Faulkner, an eminent printer, well known in Dublin, for which performance he sued Mr. Foote, and cast him for damages.

When Foote wrote the part he had two legs, but Mr. Faulkner had but one: Foote afterwards sustained the same loss; myself too nearly experienced the same painful and dreadful misfortune: Thank God, not quite so unfortunate. When I was before the judge in the court of justice, as subpoenaed on trial, I related the following additional lines as Peter Paragraph.

*Peter Par.* An't please your worship, Mrs. Paragraph was as beautiful a woman, and of as good a family as any in all Ireland—her sister too is a perdigius agreeable woman—she has perhaps one of the finest necks of any lady in all Dublin. I encountered her one morning upon the middle of the stairs—my hand fell accidentally upon her bosom, and I protest and vow, please your worship, it gave me such a *thrill*, I felt it at the bottom of my dead limb.

*Second Story as PETER PARAGRAPH.*

*Peter Par.* My wife Mrs. Paragraph, was a perdigius agreeable woman. As we were returning to Ireland, in October, in the year 1739-40, during the autumnal equinox, a violent storm arose, I



went down into the cabin unto her, and said Mrs. Paragraph, my dear, answer me one question—Sink or swim, have you been untrue unto my bed? Says that dear woman (by way of reply) My dear, —sink or swim, that secret shall go along with me. —O! she was a perdition's valuable woman!—you might have trusted her with any thing.

At those little jokes I was applauded in Peter Paragraph; but as to the stories circulated, and believed about my running away from conviction of intentional affront from myself, they were too ridiculous to tell, and more so to be credited; what added to the idea of designed insult that night was at the conclusion of my Tea, I gave a Medley which Mr. Garrick himself had wrote for Mr. Beard, and given to me; he designed it first as a compliment to Mr. Beard for his Ranelagh benefit, but after that he altered it for the playhouse.

The lines taken as rude, were the very harmless ones that follow, to a common tune——

Now if you think I'm wrong,  
 In all I've said or sung,  
 And wish that poor I had been dumb, dumb, dumb,  
 Tho' the fish are in the net,  
 Yet I shall fume and fret,  
 And though I have caught you be mum, mum, mum,  
 I therefore beg and pray,  
 That nothing you will say,  
 Lest others next year should not come, come, come.



For if like you they're taught,  
They'll not like you be caught,  
And therefore I pray you all mum, mum, mum.

Their being in an ill humour, and my singing those lines in the medley very gravely, (as I judged a very good joke) they absolutely took seriously, and occasioned all the bustle and nonsense here related, and in resentment they echoed back—*hum, hum, hum*; and it was agreed, *nem. con.* that I intentionally laughed at them.

To speak my thoughts on the matter, I perceived myself much injured by such ill-suspensions and misconstructions on all I had done; and I really had fatigued myself more that night, hoping to please, than almost any one I ever performed before or since; as it was too much even for a stronger constitution than mine.

As I remained on the spot, instead of quitting Norwich, my very extraordinary departure from which I shall immediately give an account of, that must satisfy all who believe or disbelieve to the contrary.

During my residence there my mother gave me the following account of her ILLNESS, by which it will be perceived, as a son, I did not neglect that precious friend.



“ MY DEAR TATE,

“ I HAD the pleasure of yours on Tuesday, but  
“ was neither able nor willing to inform you that I  
“ have been so far gone as to be obliged with great  
“ reluctance to have the further advice of an emi-  
“ nent physician :—I am but just begun with his  
“ advice ; but having done all, I resign myself to  
“ the Great Disposer of life or death.——I  
“ have had two very friendly visits from Mrs.  
“ Batt. Lady Forbes, not very little noticed till  
“ this day, two bottles of Madeira, with an offer  
“ of any thing in her power. I know her good  
“ will would not be wanting.—I pity her, and  
“ think her situation more distressed than my own.  
“ She offered writing to you, but I said I had  
“ wrote, and would again as soon as able. I won-  
“ der not at your being heart sick of the Minor ;  
“ feel glad at this week’s rest, and should be still  
“ more happy if you would give way to a few se-  
“ rious thoughts why this is truly called the *Passion*  
“ *Week*. You will excuse these little hints from  
“ one who is ever anxious both for your increa-  
“ sing happiness here and hereafter.

“ Your most affectionate mother,

“ G. WILKINSON.”

*London, March 31, 1763.*



“ MY DEAR TATE,

“ YOUR affectionate cares and unbounded  
“ offers far exceed what I could ever either ex-  
“ pect or desire. I thank God I have not wanted  
“ any necessary helps; and for your kind fears that  
“ I do not cheer my spirits with eating and drink-  
“ ing, you know I cannot bear two days plenty  
“ without being ill; and I had, as I told you,  
“ dined out every day, which occasioned my pre-  
“ sent illness. I am I hope better, but kept weak  
“ by physic. Mrs. Hutchinson sent me a chicken  
“ and six bottles of Bristol water, (refreshing  
“ draughts). Of what use am I, to think of a  
“ journey to Bath at your expence?—No, my dear  
“ Tate, if I ever consent to that, you must be there  
“ to complete the cure: and as to accepting your  
“ princely offer of 30l. for the journey, oh! that  
“ must be a most desperate and killing extremity in-  
“ deed, and could give no true nourishment whilst  
“ feeding so deep upon what you so industriously  
“ slave for: but above all, the overflowing joy and  
“ satisfaction you give completes the wishes of my  
“ soul, in that serious just sense you express so suf-  
“ ficiently in few words, of that awful reverence  
“ impressed by God upon your mind:—hold  
“ there, and be blessed for ever.

“ The expeditious filling your boxes appears  
“ highly in your favour indeed; but that pleasure



“ seems still to be alloyed by the impossibilities set  
 “ forth in your over-worked bill ; for after *Lear*  
 “ alone I should wish you in a warm bed.

“ Though a sight of you, even for one night,  
 “ would rejoice my heart, yet I beg you will rest  
 “ a night or two ; and as your trunk must be  
 “ much shattered, would have you get a new one,  
 “ and leave the old one here.

“ Having just made a comfortable meal of half  
 “ a fine sweet-bread, with the blessing of God  
 “ hope to be able to cook and eat with you by  
 “ the time you talk of seeing again

“ Your ever blessed

“ And affectionate mother,

“ G. WILKINSON.”

*London, Apr. 5, 1763.*

These short letters, it is true, have no particular connection with the work ; but the contents flowed from a pen of such true worth as will render them far from unacceptable to every worthy mind, whether depressed or exalted, as “ Nature speaks with most miraculous organs.”

My benefit was Monday, April 11 ;—and on Wednesday the 13th of April I acted *Douglas* : I also spoke *Bucks have at ye All*, and performed the usual parts in the Minor. Sufficient duty for one night, well or indifferently manœuvered : for



I was threatened with strong marks of resentment, and they were in reality very angry; so I was prepared for, and expected it. Yet I was such a favourite, that when I made my appearance their good-nature got the better of their disgust, and I was astonished at receiving my usual good welcome; not a *single mark of disapprobation*. Thursday the 14th I played Mrs. Amlet, and, for the first time, Hartop in the Knights; Sir Gregory Gazette, Mr. Weston; Tim, Mr. Dodd. On Saturday the 16th was advertised my last night of playing: I spoke Bucks, and repeated Hartop: The comedy I was not concerned in—it was Rule a wife and Have a Wife, acted purposely to introduce Mr. Larry Kennedy, and was the only night the manager, Mr. Ivory, had left (as manager): the regular course of benefits beginning the Monday following.

Two offences *more* in the course of the week I was informed I had committed, but indeed very innocently. It was at that time not only the custom there (and a horrid custom it certainly was), but also at York, Hull, &c. &c. for the performer, whether man or woman, to attend the playbill-man round the town, knock humbly at every door honoured with or without a rapper, and supinely and obediently stop at every shop and stall to leave a playbill, and request the favour of Mr. and



Mrs. Grifkin's company at the benefit. The heroine (if unmarried) was equally responsible for steering her steps—no matter whether the Juliet, the Cleopatra, the Lady Townly, or the Queen Elizabeth: no dignity of any kind allowed for such an omission, without being construed a violation of duty; that severe law of custom then in force must be complied with, or looked on as an infringement of rules and respect, and would incur censure, with the appellation of pride, impudence, insolence, and want of reverence: no matter how severe the weather, if frost, snow, rain, or hail, Jane Shore and the proud Lady Macbeth were expected equally to pay the same homage. If the Lady Turtle Dove was blessed with a loving mate, her attendance was dispensed with, but not otherwise on any pretext whatever; in that case the honour devolved on the husband. These laws (thank God) I had not been accustomed to: and having a plentiful well-supplied pocket had no need to comply, or trouble myself to use such a practice; which I dare say superior minds to my own have, from the dictates of prudence and necessity, against their will too often complied with; and the produce of my house proved such degrading rules were better broke than kept for the credit of the actors. And blessed be the times to say what I relate had better not have been mentioned,



but be buried and forgot: But there are those who can vouch to the inglorious and disgraceful truth, and I can boast as being one of the first who relieved my brethren in the country from such slavery.

Another custom was, after the play the performer was to return thanks, and if married, both husband and wife to appear. Mr. Frodsham once at York spoke a comic epilogue on his benefit night, and actually carried his wife (now living) on and off the stage on his back, to comply with the expected homage:—on particular occasions four or five children to make up weight, courtesying and bowing in frocks, had a wonderful effect, as the audience in general, and the ladies in particular, prided themselves upon bestowing their bounty on such a pains-taking man, or such a pains-taking couple as they proved themselves to be. Tho' I had heard so much of those customs, yet I was honourably received after all my alledged ILL-BEHAVIOUR at *Norwich*, as usual, with much pleasantry and good humour. The last night of my acting there I made as polite an acknowledgement as lay in my power, and meant what I said, that I really thought myself, as a stranger at *Norwich*, particularly honoured and obliged; which coming unexpectedly was received with double effect, and I was dismissed with great glory and marks of ap-



probation; and the audience were not a little pleased that I confessed myself indebted to them for the favours they had conferred on me.

Now, after such particulars, it is really astonishing how such falsehoods to the contrary could be propagated and believed from that time 1763, and never cleared up till 1787, when I was last at Norwich, and will be much more so by this faithful account. Another strange custom they had at Norwich, and if abolished it has not been many years, which was for a drummer and a trumpeter (not the King's) in every street to proclaim in an audible voice, having been assisted by his shrill notes to summons each garreteer, without which ceremony the gods would not submit to descend from their heights into the streets to inquire what play was to be acted, nor ascend into the gallery.

A custom of this kind prevailed so far with a Mr. Herbert's Lincolnshire company in the time of our revered, well-remembered, and beloved Marquis of Granby, that when at Grantham the players determined to omit the usual ceremony of the drum, wishing to grow more polite; and by obstinate perseverance, Lady Jane Gray, Mary Queen of Scots, King Henry the Eighth, the King of France, nay even Cardinal Wolsey had no command, attraction, or power over the populace when they lost their accustomed and so much



loved sound of the drum and trumpet. The ladies were obstinate, tho' they could not by all their arts, or by all their charms, obtain a livelihood; and their heroism was so great, that they preferred death, honourable death, rather than submit to slavish terms. The Marquis of Granby sent for the manager of the troop, and said to him, "Mr. Manager, I like a play; I like a player; and *shall* be glad to serve you:—But, my good friend, why are you all so suddenly offended at and averse to the noble sound of a drum?—I like it," said the Marquis, "and all the inhabitants like it: Put my name on your play-bill, provided you drum, *but not otherwise*. Try the effect on to-morrow night; if then you are as thinly attended as you have lately been, shut up your playhouse at once; but if it succeeds, *drum away*." The manager communicated this edict to the princes, princesses, *peers* and *peeresses*; and not only they, but even the *ambitious step-mother*, gave up all self-consideration for the public weal; and it was after some debate voted *nem. con.* in favour of the drum: they deigned to try Lord Granby's suggestion, and to their pleasing astonishment their little theatre was brim-full on the sound of the drum and Lord Granby's name; after which night they row-di-di-dow'd away, had a very successful season, and drank flowing bowls to the health of the



noble Marquis. They left Grantham in great credit, without being drummed out of town, tho' accompanied by their friend the drummer ; and I am told the custom is continued at Grantham to this day. This is a strong proof how difficult it is to surmount prejudices, whether in religion, politics, or even so trivial a matter as the sound of a drum ; for rumour has fewer tongues than she has ears.

But, my good reader, observe, I have not yet in my History got from Norwich :—if you will kindly look back to Mr. Kennedy's acting Leon the last night I played there in 1763, I must faithfully inform you, that after all my quarrels, &c. with Mr. Foote, however contradictory to my resolves and Mr. Foote's repeated declarations, he had secretly sent Kennedy to Norwich as an ambassador with credentials, neither more nor less than not only to present articles of peace, but for re-uniting our forces, and to engage Weston for the ensuing summer at the Haymarket. Mr. Kennedy was commissioned to assure me, that Mr. Foote was much concerned for the misunderstandings and mistakes which had subsisted between us for no less than *five years* ; that he wished Mr. Kennedy, as an acquaintance and friend of both, would inform me I might depend upon his being serious and honourable in mean-



ing an engagement, which he hoped would prove lasting and advantageous to both ; that in many pieces, dividing the parts, would be better for each of us ; for however clever he might flatter himself to be from his own opinion and the partiality of the public, he was convinced one person perpetually before the audience, be he ever so excellent and meritorious, had not so great an advantage as by a little space ere he was seen again : (a certain good remark for me then, and many young performers now, to remember). His letter added, that he had wrote a part purposely for me in a new farce called *The Mayor of Garratt*, which he should cut out, unless I would consent to perform it ;—also a division between us in *Tragedy A-la-Mode*, and that I should play *Hartop* in the *Knights*, and he would act *Sir Gregory*, &c.—He asked what I desired for every night, not only when I acted, but every one that his theatre in the Haymarket was opened ; and that I might take my benefit at three weeks notice whenever I pleased in his season, and be allowed to revive or act on that night what I thought proper, and that it should be clear of all expences whatever ; and concluded with assuring me, he should not only be heartily and sincerely glad to see me as a performer, but as his particular friend ; that his house and table should be always at my service, if I



would do him the favour to make it my home whenever not better engaged.—This was a change! and it was flattering, profitable, and reputable.—I instantly made proposals, which were immediately agreed to, by a letter that reached me on my arrival at York, and the first week in June I was to attend the Haymarket theatre.

What made Mr. Foote so very generous, open, and explicit, was, that he judged it would be lucrative to him if he complied as to terms.

So it plainly appears that a war of five years was amicably and honourably concluded, with a peace not inglorious, but equitably adjusted for the advantage of both parties, and from that time not any bickerings or breach of treaties happened between us to the time of his death, in the autumn season 1777.—Peace to his manes! His entertaining qualities and universality of executive and astonishing genius are too well known, established, and acknowledged, to need any eulogiums from my weak abilities. He was not without virtues, though he had those foibles and faults, to which human nature is too subject,—So Foote farewell—

All thy good now blazes,  
All thy ill be buried in thy grave.

From Norwich I took a trip to York, where I had never been, and entered into a treaty with Mr.



Baker for six nights. Mr. Baker was the gentleman I named as manager of the York theatre, with whom I had previously formed an intimate acquaintance, as before-mentioned, at Mrs. Wier's, in the autumn 1758.

As my Norwich engagement finished on Sunday April the 16th, I intended quitting that place on the Monday morning following; but as I had grown rich, I at that time was wonderfully prudent, and determined on a saving scheme: So I gave up all idea of travelling so far as York, and lolling all the way in a post-chaise. Therefore the only prudent method was to go in the Monday morning's coach as far as Newmarket, but I could not be permitted to take a place for half way, unless they were left empty for want of London passengers; which was and is, I believe, still the constant custom. I was called up early on the Monday morning to be ready for the coach; but judge my disappointment and chagrin, when on my approach I found it chuck-full, as is often said at the theatre. What was to be done? A post-chaise I could not think of, on account of the charge:—There was no time allowed for consideration, as all was prepared and ready at the Maid's Head for instant procedure. I determined to leave Norwich most triumphantly, and at an easy expence—two points not always in the power of us mortals—by



exalting myself on the coach-box ; a situation I was as unfit for as the undertaking to ride on horses at the Royal Grove : — But previously I had petitioned, reasoned, urged, and intreated, but all to no effect ; I could not make any impression on the obdurate souls, who, proud and sulky, kept easy and firm possession of their seats, and hardly deigned to answer when I requested permission to be squeezed in, but could not soften their hard hearts : and under the rose be it spoken, no hearts are harder than those of travellers in stage coaches, diligences, &c. and not without some reason ; for if not guarded by hearts of steel, it would, with the conjoined interest of inn-keepers and post-boys, be a perpetual tax upon our good-natures, our convenience, and our pockets, as we should pay for what we did not possess. However, the inside passengers on that occasion called aloud on Mr. Whip to drive on ; so my trunks, &c. were left in the basket, and I was hoisted on the coach-box as the only alternative : but on the first movement of the vehicle, if it had not been for the arm of the coachman, I should have been instantly under the wheels in the street, as I had not the least notion how to keep my seat ; therefore the enraged travellers were under the necessity of once more being detained till I was relieved by the help of the hostler and servants of



the inn, who were there and full ready to assist: I was received into their arms from the coach-box, and chucked into the basket as a place of more safety, though not of ease or comfort, where I suffered most severely from the jolting, particularly over the stones; it was most truly dreadful, and made me suffer almost equal to the sea-sickness I had experienced on board the packet in a storm: however, as I had lived well at Norwich, the coach emetic did me no harm.

The stage coaches then were not hung on springs as they are at present, nor were the roads near so good:—The coach was then double the time in performing the journey. We arrived at Newmarket, where, though I produced myself as an outside passenger, I was permitted the honour of being treated at table as an inside guest; for they all knew me and pitied my situation, but naturally preferred my suffering some torment, rather than being miserably stowed themselves by cramming the vehicle as if loaded with Norwich turkies at Christmas, and that merely to accommodate a stranger. We of the coach all supped together, separated for bed, wished each other a good night, with pleasant and safe journies to our different destinations; they to London, myself to cross the country till I got to the great North road.—On inquiry I was informed a stage crossed from



either Ipswich or Bury (I forget which) the next day about twelve, which I determined to wait for; and I conceived it a matter of pleasing intelligence, for it had a delightful convenience as to the hour of its coming, as it allowed me a long time to rest before it arrived. After I had breakfasted on Tuesday the coach stopped, and from out of it, to my infinite mortification, came no less than six passengers; therefore I thought of nothing but ringing the bell and having immediate recourse to the agreeable though expensive post-chaise; but on inquiry one of the persons had only taken a place to Newmarket, in order to be in readiness for the next Norwich coach to London. So after an hour's baiting for the guests and horses, we took possession of the vehicle, proceeded slowly, and arrived about three o'clock at Cambridge; where finding not any other carriage crossed on to the North road, I sat myself down at the inn (a very indifferent one) and ordered whatever was ready to be produced for my immediate dinner.

While I was regaling over my pigeon pye, &c. a very decent elderly looking kind of man, a farmer, made his appearance, seemingly communicative and intelligent, I asked him questions relative to the distance from Stamford, and what places were



best worth seeing at Cambridge. This formed an intimate chat; and he accepted part of my bottle of port. When I thought of ordering my chaise after a little walk to view the gardens and buildings of the place in a cursory manner, and taking my leave of the farmer, who had been very attentive to my story, and relating to him my manner of travelling from Norwich to Cambridge, he said after carefully viewing me, that he kept a travelling weekly cart, which he came with from Stamford: He was not fond of trusting strangers, as appearances often were wrong; but, if instead of the expence of a post-chaise, I would accept his horse at a moderate price, and go that night to Huntingdon, the poor beast was at my service for the journey, and he would himself with my luggage go in his cart, which his man would conduct. I relished the scheme mightily, and judged I was undertaking a Quixote exploit by my attempting to ride a horse sixteen miles. This great matter was that afternoon put in practice, and I set off on my Rosinante and achieved my exploit by actually going the sixteen miles without any danger whatever, and fancied myself a complete horseman; but must observe, what with the delay in point of time, the stopping all night at Huntingdon, &c. my scheme of œconomy was only visionary, for the etceteras would



have been more comfortable and actually less expensive, than the laborious and mean plan I in my wisdom had entered upon. The carrier however honoured me so far with his good opinion, first securing my luggage, that he went off at six in the morning for Stamford, and left me and the horse to take our leisure, having first very kindly invited me to dine with him at Stamford. When I got there I called to see him, and he really expected me as his guest; but that I avoided, sent a porter for my luggage, thanked the carrier, and once more became the gentleman at one of the principal inns, waiting for the York coach, with strict orders at night to be called up at five for the purpose of securing a place; but after lounging my lonely day at Stamford, and being summoned to be in readiness for the coach, here my unfortunate stars again pursued me; for lo the coach was full, with three officers and three insignificants. In that bewildered and perplexed state what was to be done? Why, give a strong proof of perseverance, and in defiance of danger, and like a great little soul (for surely it was a meanness) once more throw myself into the arms of my old friend the basket. It was very sharp, windy, cold, disagreeable weather, and the jolting over the stones in every country town in that captive state might be deemed truly dreadful, both as to pain and fatigue.



The officers, who in general are polite, friendly, entertaining, and agreeable, soon recognized me, and professed being hurt at my disagreeable situation, but their feelings were not so exquisite and humane, but that laughter evidently was victorious on the occasion; to me jumbling through Grantham was terrible, and equalled to my fancy that of Algerine slavery: yet though I appeared to myself like a vagabond passing by act of parliament from parish to parish, and felt great cold without, I had some amends by being admitted as one of their own party at every stage, within, or where any refreshments were taken, which was some alleviation to my sorrows, though not satisfactory; for those sorrows, (as too often is the case) were of my own bringing on; as foolish indiscretions often give a strong colour to appearances that serve to corroborate as facts, which originate every one of them perhaps from a trivial and undesigned chance that tumbles blunder upon blunder till it forms a something, which if properly known would end like the air-blown bubble of the day.

So was I rightly punished in my journey to York, by undergoing shame, fatigue, and the hazard of my health, while I possessed a plenty to have prevented any one of those vexations; for I suffered myself to be hoisted from my dog-kennel for two days, stage after stage: but as under the



greatest afflictions sometimes a gleam of hope will arise, though soon again to vanish, so in this journey on the first night, the three officers at supper agreed to take a chaise at Ferrybridge, and quit the York road for that of Boroughbridge, and proceed on to Scotland. This gave me great spirits as it insured me an inside place, for my first entrance into the city of York; where rather than arrive basketted, I would have entered triumphantly in my carriage to breakfast the next day; but all my hopes were frustrated by a change of their intentions, and on they would go to York as their places were taken. So far the reader may suppose I am not adhering to truth, when I mention we were two days in going from Stamford to York; but in the year 1763, the roads were so bad at particular seasons of the year, that they were for want of proper forming almost impassable; and it has been known in the winter to have been eight or ten days journey from York to London. At that time it was not so familiar as it now is for ladies and gentlemen to fly like air-balloons, from the farthest points of east and west, and from north to south. For a lady now thinks not of hardship but of pleasure, when she equips herself *en militaire* for a voyage to the East Indies, either with a husband or for a husband. There is not at present half the preparation to quit York-



hire for a few weeks and trip to Paris, as there was sixty years ago, to go only from York to London. Cibber's John Moody gives an excellent description of that matter. Fathers and mothers, then, made their wills ere they set forward; and the leaving a darling pet son either at York or London, to learn politeness, education, and good manners, not forgetting the fashions, were matters required more than common fortitude. In short, two hundred miles, in this enlightened age, is no more considered as a journey, than formerly to dine at Windsor from London was; which could hardly be done with the assistance of four horses, and a moon-light morning.

The old saying at London, amongst servants, was, "I wish you were at York!" which the enraged female cook now has changed for, "I wish you were at Jamaica!" Scotland was then imagined by the Cockney as a dreary place, distance almost as the West Indies: now an agreeable party may with the utmost ease dine early in the week in Grosvenor-square, and without discomposure set down at table on Saturday or Sunday in the New-Town of Edinburgh.—So did I attain the journey in the basket in severe weather, and jolting till the coach stopped at Ferrybridge, when to my joy and great comfort the officers took chaise, and I got into (as I at that moment



thought) the most elegant, delightful carriage I ever stepped into in my life. I arrived safe at York, and supped with Mr. Baker. That worthy man received me like a parent, would not suffer me to be at an inn or hire a lodging, but yielded up his own convenience of bed-chamber for a very inconvenient situation in point of comparison; and unless I ordered what I liked for dinner the family might have been starved, the old gentleman was so very attentive and earnest to make it pleasant to his young guest.

Saturday, April 23, 1763, *Romeo and Juliet*, with the Frenchified Lady never in Paris, was plaistered on the walls, for the benefit of Mr. Buck. This year was the first Spring Meeting that ever had been attempted at York. It did something as to resort of company, but the year after it sunk entirely, and was not again revived till within a few years back; at present it seems to promise a lasting establishment.

My first appearance was on Saturday, April the 30th, in the *Minor*, which was acted after *Richard III.*; and on Tuesday, May the 3d, for the second time, after the *Busy Body—Marplot*, *Mr. Frodsham*: I was well received by a very genteel house. The ladies of York, without any compliment, have a grace, a manner, a decorum, not often met with out of the Metropolis



(Bath excepted) ; for York certainly boasts a pre-eminence, when the boxes on public weeks are crowded, that dazzles the eyes of a stranger ; and no wonder, for as London and Bath culls the choicest beauties from the three kingdoms, so does ancient York city at times, allure them from Hull, Leeds, Doncaster, Wakefield, Pontefract, and every part of that noble, spacious and rich county. And I am free to declare, that the ladies of York (in my judgment) never shew themselves to such advantage as when they fill the boxes of the York theatre ; and for the sake of a person that shall be nameless, I should be happy in having the honour of seeing it so graced and enlivened much oftener than it is.

My next appearance was in Cadwallader—Mrs. Cadwallader, by Miss Philips, my old acquaintance in Dublin, in 1758. Miss Philips was when I first acted at York in great esteem with many genteel persons ; and she was so kind as to assure all her acquaintance that I was no impostor, but the true Don Philip, she having played for Mr. Wilkinson's benefit in Dublin, when the pit and boxes were thrown together. If that favourable information was not of real service, it was meant well, and could do no harm ; but indeed I may affirm it deserves even now an acknowledgement for



her good report, though *she hears it not, nor sees it not*. She meant well—who can do more?

Miss Warnford was then at York, who was a kind of patroness to her; and I believe to her fair account of me to that lady, I must set down myself a considerable debtor to Miss Philips. Miss Warnford has been many years married to Mr. Sitwell, a gentleman of large fortune, whose integrity and good qualities are so generally known, as to render any panegyrick impertinent; but the ever constant and benevolent acts of friendship I have experienced from Mr. and Mrs. Sitwell, would sink me into ingratitude did I not thus present my small tribute to their worth, and sincerely assure them how much I esteem myself honoured and obliged.

My third character was Bayes, in the Rehearsal, which was judged a service of danger, Mr. Frodsham, being esteemed capital in the part; but there opinion was wrong, for I had been so familiarized to that kind of playing, and was so much better stage acquainted, that I obtained a complete victory in spite of partiality, which in general is obstinate; yet must be allowed often praise-worthy. Indeed Mr. Frodsham was totally unfit for that character, and his friends as well as the rest of the audience would have found that out, had not five out of six subscribed to whatever he



did was quite right, without even consulting their own judgments. I repeated the Minor, on Saturday; and on Wednesday the 11th of May, I acted King Lear, and Frodsham, Edgar; in the mad scenes he was the best I have seen, though I remember poor Reddish whilst I am relating it. My Lear was greatly received as it did not interfere with their darling Frodsham, and both being in the same play gave much satisfaction.

Saturday, May 14, the Fair Penitent—Horatio, Mr. Wilkinson; Lothario, Mr. Frodsham; and the Minor.—Tuesday, May 17, 1763, the season finished for my benefit, with the Jealous Wife, and Duke and no Duke.—I acted Oakley and Trappolin; but depended on the success of my never failing Tea as to attraction.—I was favoured with a crowded audience, both before and behind the curtain; for the stage was filled with gentlemen\*; but my Tea scalded their mouths, and though they were not ready to set the hue and cry after me, as at Norwich, yet they grumbled much, and the next day I heard of nothing but what a shame it was to have made Mr. Wilkinson so fine a benefit, and in return he only *laughed* at and insulted them with *hum, hum, hum*. In short, it was evident in

\* At that time admittance behind the scenes was allowed, not only at benefits; but in general to the gentlemen who frequented the boxes.



the opinion of every body, I only sneered at the York audience, and that it was little better than picking their pockets, and a great deal more and worse; for slander is told readily, and swallowed glibly——

————— Slander,

Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue  
Out venoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath  
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie  
All corners of the world, kings, queens, and states,  
Maids, matrons; nay, the secrets of the grave  
This viperous Slander enters.—————

This was certainly irksome, but patience ever was my badge, and what I had done deserved praise, though they had not done me justice; for as I had gained laurels by my endeavours, and dint of hard labour, for which though I own I got money, and in that material point was well satisfied, yet all my glories withered, and every wreath was torn from my brow; so, instead of a triumphal exit, mine was certainly a degraded one: however my pocket was full, my health was good, and my spirits were great, and not aided, but rather lessened by too much of the grape; therefore a fig for care!

After my northern expedition I had twelve or fourteen days to spare for relaxation, so I pocketed my affronts, and proceeded to see my friend



Daniel Smith, at Chester, where I drank the health of all my York friends, not in Tea, but over a bottle (perhaps two or three) of claret, with Mr. Wilberham, and several others of that place, and a very happy visit it was to me, though not without fatigue ; for what we generally term pleasure, by a mistaken use of the idea is perverted too often to the contrary effect, by not letting reason give it its boundaries : however I recollected business must be attended to, as without the means I well knew pleasure and friends would be very distant ; for independence creates complacency, and eagerness to please, which dependance in a few days destroys. So I veered about like the weather-cock, from west to south, to visit once more my native home, old London city, “ where every one is witty, and all the streets are paved with gold,” and to renew my acquaintance with my *new* old intimate Mr. Foote, whom I had not spoke to for some years.

When I arrived at my lodgings, I need not repeat the anxious mother was not only rejoiced, but almost speechless to see her son, after an absence of several months, and the more so on account of her late illness, before related by letters to Norwich, &c. After a few days solace on my own spot of birth, parentage, and education, I paid my devoirs to the manager at the Hay-Market theatre,



where I found Mr. Foote earnestly employed in a work of training his militia company to prepare for a summer campaign. He soon espied me in the orchestre, where I had observingly placed myself; the Rehearsal was soon finished, I mounted the stage, and after a most friendly greeting, to the astonishment of every one, the most amazing coalition of intimacy made its wonderful appearance, and equalled any change politics had ever presented to view. The troop was mute, glad, but more surpris'd when the carriage was ordered, and Mr. Foote insisted on my dining with him that day, as a large party of the first persons were to be at his table. I did not expect such civility; but it may easily be supposed I could not resist. It also seemed to augur an intention of good will at least; and if not, a good dinner, good company, and Mr. Foote at the head of the table, few persons even of rank would have disliked; besides it placed me not only on a footing of superiority, but prevented any suspicion in myself, as to ill-treatment from Mr. Foote, of which I had not entirely divested my mind. He was then preparing his Mayor of Garratt, in which piece he had wrote a part, he informed me, that was in fact abstracted from the piece, and that he could do with or without it. It was impossible for himself to do it; for with a false belly for his intended



Major Sturgeon, and to undress for Matthew Mug, it was not practicable. The part was entitled Peter Primmer, intended as a stroke of satire levelled at Mr. Sheridan, senr. who about that time had busied himself much with delivering lectures on oratory, and proposing a plan for the establishment of an academy, for the teaching of pupils the true art of public speaking.

Mr. Foote mentioned our appearing together in the piece of the Minor: for said he, the public will be better pleased with having both than one; and added, however partial the town might be to him as author and actor combined, yet the same person being perpetually in fight is cloying; and indeed I have often thought that admirable character of Othello, would be better for the actor if not so incessantly in fight; more pity and less fatigue to the performer would have been the consequence, had Shakespear so contrived; but his writings are so noble, wonderful, and natural, that I do not approve of the liberty I have taken, but will remove my remark more strongly upon my favourite character of Zanga; which is finely drawn, and a charming part for the actor, but is much hurt by his beginning and ending almost every act of the play; and though it must be granted the poetry is fine, yet as it owes its beauties to the production of art, not that of



nature, it makes the *Revenge* a heavy, laborious, tiresome play, though Alonzo, Carlos, Zanga, and Leonora, are all good parts for the performers; Zanga particularly so.

Well, I must return to Mr. Foote, with whom I dined, and it was agreed, the *Minor* should be the opening piece, early in June 1763: *Shift and Squintum*, Mr. Wilkinson;—Mrs. Cole and Smirk, Mr. Foote;—with the new farce of the *Mayor of Garratt*. My *Shift*, with the imitations, was extravagantly well received, and was repeated several nights.—The *Mayor of Garratt* had great success, and a run of almost every night in the season; it met with some opposition, which in general only gives a whet to the appetite of those who chuse to approve and support.

Peter Primmer, I dressed with an old tye-wig, like the Barber's in the *Upholsterer*, a long band neckcloth, a large rod in my right hand, and a Scotch-plaid night gown, and had six boys with primmers and rods, and six girls with horn-books, as my attendants in procession, as the candidate for being chosen *Mayor of Garratt*. My likeness was strong, and it was well taken; and as a schoolmaster at Garratt near Wandsworth, the dress was ridiculous, and not totally improper; but as a resemblance of Mr. Sheridan,



who always appeared at his lecture, and every where as a gentleman my being *too comical* destroyed the effect; therefore it was judged much better to answer the purpose intended, to dress it in black, and a bag-wig, &c. That alteration gave the people a strong conception of him they knew; whereas the ridiculous wig and gown destroyed every part of the imitation by the absurd appearance. The part I have entirely forgot, and only remember it concluded with my speaking the following verses, as an ode from the old horn-pipe song of Nancy Dawson.

Of all the girls in our town,  
The black, the fair, the red, the brown,  
That dance and prance it up and down,  
There's none like Nancy Dawson.

Her easy mien, her shapes so neat,  
She foots, she trips, she looks so sweet,  
Her every motion is complete;  
I die for Nancy Dawson.

See! how she comes to give surprise,  
With joy and pleasure in her eyes,  
To give delight she always tries;  
O Charming Nancy Dawson, &c.

The above song spoken seriously, with exact tone and manner, had an admirable force on the risibility of the well-pleased audience.



Mentioning my mock ode, as Peter Primmer will not let me omit, what at present gives me great pleasure, from the lately seeing and hearing Mrs. ESTEN recite that excellent composition, Collins's Ode on the Passions.—But as her stage performances cannot with the least degree of propriety be here inserted to accord with my proposed plan; and as the actors and actresses of the York theatre, will make an appearance in print hereafter, with their regular progression, also the London, and other performers, &c. &c. I will, by way of a Sandwich, halt for a few minutes refreshment, and present the reader with *our York Woodfall's* opinion, relative to the high promise to the public at large, from that Lady's pleasing and extensive abilities. After an Eulogium on her representation of Monimia and Rosalind, he says—"of her delivery of Collins's Ode on the Passions we know not how to speak, it was so truly perfect. We have heard it given before from a performer on the York stage with unusual effect; by ONE *we are certain* Mrs. ESTEN *has observed*. We do not hesitate to present our readers with the following elegant lines from the pen of a gentleman, to whom the WORLD is indebted for many masterly effusions, and whose sentiments may justly be applied to Mrs. Esten.



BENEATH a sad and silent shade,  
Afflicted POETRY was laid ;  
The shepherd train, the Virgin choir,  
No longer listened to her lyre ;  
But all neglected and alone,  
Her feeling and her fire were gone ;  
No Zephyr fondly su'd her breast,  
No Nightingale came there to rest ;  
The fading visions fled her eyes ;  
The visions of her ecstacies ;  
And if perchance she sought delight,  
It was amid the gloom of night ;  
It was to hear the screech-owl's cry,  
Or whistling whirlwinds rend the sky ;  
To pour her melancholy strain,  
And catch a pleasure from the pain.  
ESTEN beheld her haggard air,  
At twilight as she wander'd there,  
And felt the sympathetic woe  
That Taste and Genius ever know.  
Then eager sought the City's throng,  
To vindicate the force of Song—  
She chose an Ode divinely wild,  
Wrote by the Muse's fav'rite child ;  
From COLLINS was the magic lay,  
That subject passions all obey.  
The Crowd a varying influence prove  
Of Rage, and Hope, and Fear, and Love,  
And still implor'd him to rehearse,  
And own'd the thrilling pow'r of Verse.  
O, thou, sweet Bard ! who now may'st be  
A shadow fleeting o'er the sea,



A vapour on the morning rose,  
A whisp'ring wind at ev'ning's close;—  
Or if thy spirit love to dwell  
A while within the vi'let's bell  
Then in beatitude of change,  
From star to star exulting range,  
Live in the lustre of the day,  
Or float upon the lunar ray;  
Or rapt'rous join the hallow'd voice,  
Where endless Seraphim rejoice.  
O! COLLINS? whatsoe'er thou art,  
Deign, deign to bless thy ESTEN's heart!  
A portion of those joys reveal,  
Which sure she well deserves to feel!

“Of the person of Mrs. ESTEN we will venture to say, that it is truly captivating; that she is happy in the disposition of it, ALL must acknowledge; blessed with a set of features uncommonly lovely and expressive; a voice at once powerful and plaintive, cheerful and mellow: her merit, as far as we are able to judge from what we have hitherto seen, is nearly equal in the grave and in the gay—and yet, *wonderful to relate!* with all these perfections she is scarcely known in London, and, as we are informed, not even engaged there.”

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Mr. Foote all that season continued every act of civility in his power; his table was my constant resort (when not engaged) either at South End,



or at his lodgings in town; for the Hay-Market theatre, then, was on a smaller scale, and the dwelling house in Suffolk-street, did not appertain as now to the theatre. I supposed he judged it his interest to be on terms, and I was superior to any ill treatment, being in fact the richest man of the two: I was getting money perpetually, did not owe a shilling, and was in possession of some hundreds, therefore was an independent gentleman. Mr. Foote now and then got a great deal of money, which was soon expended; the theatre only by permission from the Lord Chamberlain during pleasure, and he owed many hundreds; nay, even at last, I am afraid, I relate a truth when I affirm, his funeral was at Mr. Jewell's expence; for notwithstanding his income from Mr. Colman was not less than sixteen hundred a-year, besides profits on the nights he acted, yet I have been informed he had not effects by any means equal to the payment of his debts. It shocks me to have related an account of so many stage struck geniusses of birth and talents, that have fallen a sacrifice to grinning poverty, and incurred neglect and ignominy with great incomes. Pray God to allot me a more fortunate *finale*, be its statement appointed for a longer or a shorter date.

But to proceed with a more particular account of our Haymarket sessions.—I gained ground with



the audience weekly:—my benefit was fixed on the 20th of August, on which night I revived the Rehearsal, and acted Bayes—the house overflowed from every part—no such receipt the whole season. Mr. Garrick was in Italy, and had not acted Bayes for some years.—My imitation of Holland in the following lines————

How strange a captive am I grown of late?

Shall I accuse my love? or blame my fate?

My love I cannot: That is too divine!

And against fate what mortal dares repine?

had such a sudden effect, that Mr. Churchill who sat in a balcony with the late Lucy Cooper, after laughing to a very violent degree, most vociferously encored the speech, which was echoed by the whole voice of the theatre, and complied with by me of course with great pleasure. Mr. Churchill said, that he was convinced I was not a mimic's mimic, for the imitations were palpably my own.—He also encored my mock hornpipe, which was a resemblance of the manner of stage-dancing. The whole play went off with universal satisfaction, and I was highly delighted. Mr. Foote that night was not pleased, but rather chagrined at my good fortune:—these things will happen, and stage minds in general are sooner irritated and hurt than any other set of peoples'; but a theatre is the temple of Vanity, and Vanity and Envy are its constant residents.



The farce on my benefit was the Mayor of Garratt, in which Mr. Foote of course played his Major Sturgeon.

Mr. Mendez, a Jew and an appraiser in Bow-street, was the treasurer that season : On his benefit he requested me to repeat the character of Bayes, which entreaty I granted :—he had a full house, and the comedy received additional credit. I had very near been deprived of the play, as Mr. Foote's theatre at that time merely consisted of a few trumpery scenes, no wardrobe but such as was hired from Mr. Barber's in Monmouth-street : and as to stage properties, they were less known there than in the most distant rustic company that scoured the country round. I was quite out of favour at Drury-Lane, so had no hopes of assistance from that quarter : but Mrs. Rich, on application being made to her, supplied me with thunder, lightning, earth, moon, and sun ; also sent to my aid a full troop of horse : they had been well trained, were very quiet, and of a great age ; were never turbulent, tho' sometimes troubled with headstrong wanton riders. It was a custom for the gentleman and his lady, who were proprietors of the Haymarket theatre, to reserve a box for themselves, of which they kept the key. I sent a card the week of my benefit requesting the favour of that box, as all the others were disposed.



of: A very rude refusal was sent back; at which time Mr. Ruspini, now of Pall-Mall, and some gentlemen were with me, and complaining of not being able to procure any box whatever. On my receiving an uncivil answer, I said, "Damn this Mrs. Proprietor! it would serve her ill-natured spleen right to break open the door and fill the box." The hint was no sooner given than seriously taken and put into practice; for as soon as the doors were opened a large party paid, and finding every place was taken, except the Proprietor's, which the box-keeper assured them could not be opened on any pretext whatever, they unanimously burst the old lock and filled the whole box, nor had the turnkey of the Recess rhetoric sufficient to have the least effect, for expostulation did not signify; so they remained sole masters, and sat in triumph till near seven, when the play was going to begin; at which instant up came a limb of the law, no less a personage than Mr. George Garrick, escorting the Lady Proprietress with a large party *gratis*, who summoned the garrison to surrender and be treated as prisoners of war; but they were as obstinate as turks, and determined to defend the citadel sword in hand. The Lady Proprietress was astonished at the rudeness committed, and insisted on her privileged right; then tried angry and soothing words; but neither her



persuasive eloquence nor the authority of Mr. George Garrick, aided by John Doe and Richard Roe of Westminster-Hall, with all their united prowess, could by any means avail. The possessors of the inside works defended their intrenchment from any breach, and they only in exultation laughed, and told Geo. Garrick if himself and party would pay a crown per head they should be admitted, not otherwise. It cannot be imagined that it was an easy matter to extract coin from a lawyer's pocket, consequently the Lady, George Garrick, and party, finding it ineffectual by staying in the box passage, retreated in disgrace, but denounced vengeance on Wilkinson. For my own part I chuckled at the adventure, not so much for the trifling pecuniary advantage I had gained, but at that time I should have disliked the curious Garrick's party *gratis* over my head more than any other. Next day the enraged lady waited on Mr. Foote (who loved mischief and despised his landlady), where she gave an ample scope to her anger, and repeated her wrongs: but Mr. Foote told her it was impossible to prevent what had happened; as to the improper conduct respecting the box, he could only say he was sorry for her disappointment; and as to Mr. Wilkinson's rudeness he wished to excuse it, but he had not sufficient authority to whip him for his fault, and there the matter rested,



ending evidently to my advantage; for I must mention that the year following the lady herself sent permission for me to let her box to any particular friend of mine, if the boxes were so taken as to make such permission necessary on my benefit night.

Early in September (as is customary), on the approach of the royal theatres opening, we finished our summer's campaign, which ended gloriously, not a little aided by the assistance of our militia Major Sturgeon.

The night of my departure, when I went to receive my blessing and take leave of my mother, she had sunk her spirits so low with the strong prognostic of her departing from this life, that she had been obliged to retire to bed; and her feelings were so affectionately strong, she could only embrace, kiss, and bedew me with her tears, and inarticulately say, "O Tate! my dear son! I shall never see you more." Her words were indeed truly prophetic, and from that awful and distressing moment—I will relieve my reader and myself from the sensation which must occur—I departed heavily, but got into the carriage and proceeded immediately for proud Salop, known better by the title of Shrewsbury.

Mr. Whitley was manager of that company, and a man well known as an extraordinary cha-



rafter of oddity and rudeness in his traffic with actors and actresses for his imaginary dominions, which domains were here to-day and gone to-morrow. At that place the facetious, the witty, the generous, the good Chace Price, of revered memory to all who knew him, was appointed commander of the Shropshire militia, which had not been embodied (as I was informed) during the whole war which had then providentially ceased) till the month of Oct. 1763, owing to some dispute and disgust with the inhabitants of that county, who had universally judged their young men ill-used, as they had some years before this mentioned period thought themselves highly injured by government, as they had raised a regiment for home defence, trusting on that pledge of honour which was broke in a cruel manner, as they were marched off to the sea coast, were there surpris'd, forced on board transports, and sent to the Indies, and all spoken of as creditable farmers sons.—That obstacle, as the stories of the day went, was given as the reason why the Shropshire regiment had not been raised in common with those of the other counties, and all these difficulties had not been overcome till October 1763. Shrewsbury, to all who know that spot, I need not say is surrounded by a most pleasing country:—Captain



Plume speaks well of it in the Recruiting Officer, and the Raven Inn or Tavern therein mentioned I believe to this day is the favourite and fashionable house of resort. I acted in that town with Mr. Whitley's company fix or seven nights for a clear benefit, which was my first point for striking at, and it proved very lucrative; but I ever worked like a horse at a mill to deserve my engagement, whether in town or country. My benefit was appointed, at my desire, on Monday, October 3. That day I beg the reader will notice was the first day of the militia's assembling, and what was really extraordinary, happened on the annual fair for cattle at Shrewsbury; and it is no more strange than true that they were to assemble in the market-place. The clouds approved it not, for it was as dreadful and rainy a morning as ever poured upon the earth; the pavement rattled with the bursts of heavy rain and hail, accompanied with thunder and lightning. The officers judged it prudent to file off, and the young cackling recruits from instinct followed at the very time the oxen, cows, sheep, horses, &c. were mustering for the fair, and with the variety of collected captains, serjeants, country bumpkins, &c. it occasioned an uncommon tumult, noise, and distress to those concerned without doors, but to the spectators who were so happy as to possess a warm room with



a good casement, it afforded a very whimsical morning's view, from the apparent ridiculous distress of the various parties interwoven of men and beasts, &c. as the oxen ran helter skelter amidst the soldiers, populace, &c.—My benefit bill of that night was nearly as follows :

The last night, Monday, October 3, 1763, The Rehearsal : Bayes, Mr. Wilkinson. End of the play, by *particular desire*, the principal scene from the new farce called The Mayor of Garratt ; the character of Major Sturgeon (of the Westminster militia) by Mr. Wilkinson : also a scene from the Orators ; Peter Paragraph, by Mr. Wilkinson ; with the farce of the Citizen : Young Philpot, Mr. Wilkinson.—Surely I gave them enough for their money, whatever it might want in quality. The house was crowded in every part, particularly the stage, by gentlemen for want of room in the front of the house : The officers of the new militia were all there, and at their head the ever-entertaining Chace Price, whom I rejoiced to see : he had sent me a compliment at noon (being my benefit) ; and was between the acts in great spirits, chatting with me and others. At the end of the comedy of the Rehearsal he desired to wish Mr. Bayes good night, as he found himself much fatigued with his journey, and expected a severe bout the next day with the bottle at the mess where he



was president; he said he would get a good night's rest, having travelled from London to Shrewsbury without going to bed. On his departure I retired to dress for the new part of Major Sturgeon; (the reader will observe that farce was not then in print.) On my appearance behind the scenes as the Major, I thought the countenances of several of the officers did not augur a pleasing effect to my intended performance; but not supposing any violent anger could possibly arise without a sufficient cause, hoped I should be made ample amends, by the smiling faces and laughing cheeks in front of the theatre. But the new commanders not having been at that juncture in London, when Mr. Foote's Mayor of Garratt was acting, they knew nothing of its fashionable ton there, or if they did, would not allow that as a sufficient plea for them as men of valour, why they should not resent an injurious affront, from what they looked on as an unjustifiable and intentional insult; they therefore one and all pressed so hard and close together at the first wing where I was to make my entrance, as to prevent the possibility of gaining admittance on the stage; and had not Roger the Bumpkin, servant to the Justice, Sir Jacob Jollup, cried out on the stage, "Pray ye gentlemen, pray ye, let Major Fish come to visit



my master," they actually would not have suffered me to pass; but from conscious shame, and the hissing of the audience, I was at last (but not without much difficulty) permitted to enter; and I verily believe had they not so pointedly marked their indignation, the bulk of the hearers would have passed the secret over as incomprehensible; but such a remarkable and violent contempt offered to me was easily perceived by them, and once conceived their ideas swiftly communicated like gunpowder, when I came to the passage where Major Sturgeon relates to the Justice——

“ On we marched, the men all in high spirits,  
“ to attack the gibbet where Gardel is hanging;  
“ but turning down a narrow lane to the left, as  
“ it might be about there, in order to possess a  
“ pig's sty, that we might take the gallows in  
“ flank, and at all events secure a retreat, who  
“ should come by but a drove of fat oxen for  
“ Smithfield. The drums beat in the front, the  
“ dogs barked in the rear, the oxen set up a  
“ gallop, on they came thundering upon us,  
“ broke through our ranks in an instant, and  
“ threw the whole corps into confusion.”

Now reader, consider, that however *outré* and ridiculous this speech from fancy was formed, by the author Mr. Foote, the whole circumstance



had in familiarity happened that very day in every ludicrous point; and in consequence, the offended party swore, that particular passage must be the offspring of my own brain, and done as an impudent and intentional disgrace to them; and when the tumult of laughter from the audience allowed permission for me to proceed with——

“The Major’s horse took fright, away he scoured  
“over the heath. That gallant commander  
“stuck both his spurs into the flank, and for  
“some time held by his mane; but in crossing  
“a ditch, the horse reared up his head, gave the  
“Major a dowse in the chops, and threw that  
“gallant commander into a ditch near the Powder Mills.”

The officers were incensed to such a degree that they left the theatre in dudgeon, vowing vengeance. When I was undressed, and prepared to go to my own lodgings, I had information that a serjeant with five or six soldiers were in waiting with orders, not only to beat unmercifully, but to duck poor Major Sturgeon in the river: so instead of being lighted home, I acted as servant after all my fatigue, and lighted others. I got to a house where Mrs. Price and a Mrs. Lewis lived, and ordered the account of the house to be brought there and settled. Mr. Littlehale, a friend of mine, well known at Shrewsbury, was there. He



was also intimate with Chace Price, Sir Francis Delaval, &c. Dame Price (my tragedy queen at Portsmouth, in 1757) escorted us upstairs, the kitchen had an entrance on each side of the house. She had undertaken as my old acquaintance to look well to my playhouse doors, and with an observant eye mind, all was honour bright, where that tempting situation of taking money was transacted, that essential article for real kings, queens, generals, fine gentlemen, and fine ladies; for be it known, there is as much anxiety and suspicion on a benefit night out of London, and it is looked on as necessary to be as well guarded as the Bank of England, when threatened with conflagration and a riot. Any gentleman who holds half an hour's noon-conversation with an actor in the country, must have observed the following remarks and answers—  
*The house on such a night was not well counted.—*  
*Such a night the house was not well gathered.—The checks were not right.—One of the door-keepers was seen to let up several without taking any money.—*  
*Another door-keeper took six shillings; but returned two to prove his honesty.*

These sayings are often without foundation, but I am afraid at times are known to be *too true*. So Mrs. Price's inspection into the deeds of the door-keepers, with thinking eyes, was truly ne-



cessary ; but Mr. Littlehale and I, had not regaled an hour before every window below stairs were suddenly broke. The militia officers, at the head of some myrmidons, rushed into the house, and furiously demanded Wilkinson ; being assured I neither lodged or visited there, they retired eagerly through the opposite door of the kitchen in determined search of their destined prey, having been at my lodgings first. However on their departure, I had that great restorative elixir, those golden drops, as Major O'Flaherty says, which healed all my grievances ; for out of an old crazy tin, and some wooden boxes, I poured a plentiful libation of gold and silver coin, the produce of Mexico and Peru, which presented as charming a lava as can be conceived, for a *quantum sufficit* will make *black* WHITE ; FAIR, *foul* ; *wrong*, RIGHT ; *base*, NOBLE ; OLD, *young* ; and a *coward*, VALIANT.

After my incredible fatigues and a comfortable bowl, I got safely to rest, and late the next day attended my good friend Chace Price : He declared he saw me with the utmost regret and chagrin, lamented his early departure from the theatre, as had he staid he would have effectually put a stop to such brutish outrage ; hoped I would think no more of it : If I imagined, he said, that the officers bespeaking a play with his name at the head would be of service, he would exert all his



interest. I told him the accidental affray the night before dwelt on my mind with very disagreeable reflections, as the consequence might have proved dangerous: As to the play the next night, I desired it might be understood I had no advantage from it, nor would I receive any; but as it would certainly serve the company, I accepted it so far as a compliment, and my services that evening he might command. He replied, "he was obliged to me," and ordered the players to perform the Recruiting Officer, as the scene lay at Shrewsbury, and desired I would repeat Young Philpot in the Citizen: He appointed Thursday instead of Wednesday; as on the Wednesday, he had a venison dinner, and devoted the day to his friends, amongst which number he honoured me, and insisted on my dining with him at the Raven on that occasion. I made my compliments in return, and assured him I would attend his summons with infinite pleasure. I was on that day a little after my time, a fault I have been often told of; but on his left hand, at the upper end of the table, the head seat had been purposely reserved for me, and the apparent intimacy and respect he honoured me with, made the officers stare and think they were in the wrong box, by the contempt they wished to have shewn



the player. The dinner was good; the wine was good; but Chace Price was superior to both. Mirth went round, enjoying the feast of friendship, and the flow of soul. Singing was mentioned; Chace Price said humourously he must first have a rehearsal; for as his friend Wilkinson was going to leave Shrewsbury in a few days, without one he should be imperfect and forget his part, and begged the favour of me to repeat his favourite scene from the new farce of the Mayor of Garratt, and if I would act the Major, he was certain he could recollect Sir Jacob Jollup, as he had seen it that summer in London so often; which was strictly true. His memory was excellent, and he was frequently at Foote's, and was the only man of true wit I ever heard Foote allow to be so, or laugh with and listen to with pleasure; nay, Foote actually praised Chace Price behind his back.

Well, we acted the scene, which was highly relished. The good humoured intention was smothered, and it ended with an afternoon, and evening all in perpetual harmony; animosity or discord was no more thought of. I believe the R———H——, then in the militia, is the gentleman, who of late years has changed red for *black*, and has been enlisting recruits for another world, as an eminent orator, since his altering



his theatrical attendance for that of the tabernacle. Whether he has been the saving of many poor souls or the contrary, will be one day determined.—Methodists are numerous, therefore there will be no want of witnesses. God bless and forgive that sect say I; but fear they will not be so charitable as ever to return me the compliment, as I never observed humanity in their creed.

The officers came to the play on the Thursday; I dined once more at the Raven, and on the Saturday left Shrewsbury, for my favourite old city of Chester, where I made a stay of fourteen days. I had received pressing invitations from Mr. Barry; and at the expiration of my Chester visit, set off for Holyhead, once more to visit dear Dublin. The day before I went was my birth day, November the 7th, 1763; and that very day I received the following short letter from my beloved parent.

“MY DEAR TATE,

“I have been in my bed very ill, in the bilious  
“cholic these three days; as soon as please God  
“I am able, will answer all your particulars, but  
“shall be at a loss to know whether to direct to  
“Holyhead, or Dublin, or where. With all  
“God’s blessings from

“Your ever affectionate mother,

“G. WILKINSON.”



I flattered myself, though it was an illness perhaps very severe at the time, yet it might soon amend; but God ordained it otherwise—in whose presence, I doubt not, she at this moment stands, pleading for his mercies on her son below.

I set off from Chester, and journeyed through Wales, and from thence got once more to Ireland; but previously had taken a benefit night at the Exchange-Hall, Chester, which was numerously attended. I must remark an odd circumstance relating to my success at Chester:—I acted twice there at the theatre and never had a good benefit; but at the rooms, dependent only on myself, I received on one occasion upwards of 40*l*. Not that I ever attended Chester with a view for emolument of any kind whatever, but being frequently at that place, did occasionally, as opportunity offered, try the experiment, as I went to and fro so frequently.

Barry gave me a sum and my benefit, to be clear of all expences, when I chose to take it, so there needed little invitation to induce me to visit my good Dublin friends.—And I should now rejoice could I change that disagreeable part of conveyance thither, the sea voyage; but indeed I should be making so many excursions to Ireland, was that obstacle removed, that I should be ruined with post-chaise hire; so I must be contented like Pan-



glos, and persuade myself all is for the best. I went over in a dreadful storm; they talked of cutting the horses throats; I really thought they would have kicked the ship's sides into the sea: However the voyage was with difficulty accomplished, and when on shore my gratitude and dangers were too soon forgot. When I was well refreshed I waited on the attractive Mr. Barry, with whom all was soon settled, for his manners were irresistible. My first appearance was fixed on for Bayes, which was to be as soon as the play could be got ready. In the course of the first week, having an idle morning, I judged it would be pleasant, respectful, and right, to stretch a walk to visit my old friend Mr. Macklin, who then lived at the upper part of Drumcindra-Lane, the very out-skirt of Dublin, and almost in the country; though perhaps that street at this time is situated in the middle of Dublin, as the village of Marybone is in the city of Westminster. After my rat-tat at the door, a lazy servant at length opened it. (Servants in general there are by no means so alert as in England) — I inquired if Mr. Macklin was at home? He answered, “No, Sir, indeed he is not.” I left a card and my compliments, “Mr. Wilkinson from England,” but had not gone many yards on my return before the lash of



the dining-room window was thrown swiftly up, and Mr. Macklin, in his red night-cap, loudly cried out, "Wilkinson! Wilkinson! I am at home! I am at home! come back, I want to see you." I returned on the sudden invitation, the door was opened, and up stairs I mounted, was escorted into the dining-room, where I had no sooner entered than instead of Mr. Macklin *solus* as I expected, behind the door (which opened inward) stood Mr. Mossop erect, with a sword by his side, and in full dress. After the usual salutations and observations on the weather, and how all went on in England, &c. Mr. Mossop said grandly, he was very happy in having that opportunity of meeting me, as he wanted to mention such proposals for his theatre for the season as he was certain must meet with my approbation, for they would prove to me most eligible, agreeable, and highly profitable. Mr. Macklin urged the matter as his advice for the good of us both, and said he was willing, on his part, to contribute all in his power to add to the proposed union, and for the general good. Mr. Macklin was at that time engaged with Mr. Mossop. I was so circumstanced as impelled me to declare myself obliged to Mr. Mossop for his offer, but was under the necessity honestly to tell him it was then too late. I had come over to Dublin not positively engaged it was true: I had



received in England letters from Mr. Jefferson first, then from Mr. Barry while at Chester, but had not entered into actual agreement till three days previous to that present one; so that I had signed and sealed, and the matter was irrevocable. Mr. Macklin paused, looked disappointed and sorry.—Mossop breathed hard, rolled his eyes, and snuffed the air; spoke not, looked not, smiled indignant, and with resentment put his hand on his sword; his eyes looked terror; all was sunk in silence; I judged it very improper hastily to depart, and he seemed determined not to move and leave me with Mr. Macklin. I was really in a puzzling situation, being actually engaged with company at four o'clock at the worthy Cornelius Kelly's in Capel-street, who was then beloved and known by every body, and I believe is yet living, and must be a surprising age. However, I sat at Macklin's till five, when looking suddenly at my watch I seemed much surprised at the time having passed so swiftly; that I had strangely and rudely forgot myself, as I was an hour beyond the time of my engagement in Capel-street, and made my bow of departure; when Mr. Mossop rose up suddenly and said, "Sir, I wish to attend you." On crossing the channels, which were remarkably dirty, he offered me his hand very politely, then suddenly walked on for the space of five or six



minutes, when after a tragic ejaculation he stopped and said, "Sir! Mr. Wil—kin—son! how do you dare to live, Sir?"—"Why, Sir, I do not think it strange my daring, but liking to live, having such plentiful tables where I am daily made welcome in Dublin with such a number of respectable friends."—"Sir," said Mossop, "you are going to play in Crow-street theatre with Barry, Sir,—and, Sir, I will run you through the body, Sir, if you take the liberty to attempt my manner by any mimicry on the stage. You must promise me, Sir, on your honour you will not dare to attempt it: If you break that promise, Sir, you cannot live; and you, Mr. Wil—kin—son, must die—as you must meet me the next day, and I shall kill you, Sir."——I told him it was impossible to comply with that his mandate, as his threats would of course from necessity and policy have a contrary effect than what he expected, as by entreaty he would have been more likely to have carried his point: for if it once came to be known how he had worked upon my fears, there would not be a carpenter or dresser in the Dublin theatre but would kick me; and as I esteemed Mr. Mossop as a gentleman and as an actor of the first eminence on any stage, if he insisted on the dispute being seriously terminated, it would be my ultimate wish, my *omnium*, to have an affair of



Honour with him in preference to any other gentleman whatever, on account of his theatrical consequence ; as if I was fortunate it would deter many from being impudent, and if I fell in battle it must be with eclat, as it would be by the hand of so celebrated a tragedian. The coolness and serious manner, blended with ironical humour, with which I delivered that speech to Mossop, absolutely staggered him with surprise, as instead of the crouching he expected there was an apparent calmness, steadiness, and determination in what I said. At last he spoke the following words : “ You dare not take me off, Sir ; or if you do, dare not to take me off more than a *little* ; if you do more, Sir, you shall die.”—He then instantly departed as majestic as the ghost of Julius Cæsar. I very swiftly posted and wished for wings to arrive at Capel-street, where I was in good English and Irish well lectured, without any opportunity for a long time of making any defence ; but when breathing-time allowed a possibility for me, the culprit, to make any vindication, and requesting a fair trial and a benevolent jury, and relying on the laws of the country for an honourable and just examination, though at that time under severe condemnation ; yet trusting I might be indulged with a candid hearing in my own justification, I was not only listened to, but most honourably



acquitted, and with great approbation ; for Mof-fop's pride was so well known that they enjoyed his mortification ; and, blessed be God, my veracity was so well believed, that though the dinner was spoiled, (a material circumstance against me, and to the feelings of each craving stomach) we had a most remarkable cheerful day. When the evening grew late, Mrs. Wilson, a sister of Mrs. Kelly's, who lived as a companion from her childhood with the late Dowager Lady Granard, said to me, " Come, Tate, you have been uncommon good company to day ; I will not have either chair or coach, for I want you as my guard from Capel-street to Stephen's Green ;" which is near the distance from St. Clement's church to Soho-square in London. We set off on our parade, as she seemed determined to walk, it being moon-light, and the streets also well lamped, though a coach or chair was as easy to command as in any part of London. She often halted as if not well, and said she had something to tell me : I urged her often to inform me what had so apparently affected her ? she answered she would satisfy my inquiries if I would first escort her to Lord Forbes's in Stephen's Green. I perceived her as walking up Dawson-street particularly agitated, and when crossing the walk of Stephen's Green (the St. James's Park of Dublin for Promenade) she com-



plained of being ill, and begged to sit down on one of the benches, which I complied with; and after much apparent sorrow she said, "My dear Tate, faith you have been so lively and entertaining this day, and made so many of my friends happy to see you in such great spirits, you must have noticed surely every person's care and kind attention to you as more than common, though they are your sincere and good well-wishers; and not being by any means willing to disturb the pleasant party at my sister's, I put on a pleasing countenance with an aching heart of sorrow, therefore the lot of conveying ill news is reserved for me."

She then burst into tears and said, "My dear Tate, I have received a letter from your mother's dearest well-wisher, Lady Forbes, truly lamenting the loss of her agreeable intimate friend and old acquaintance, your *dear* and *revered* mother, with whom she has known many happy days. Her Ladyship desired me to assure you, Tate, that every attendance a person of the highest rank could have required had not been wanting to relieve, aid, and support her tottering impaired state of health."

Her Ladyship had added, that she would herself have been at the expence of sending for me, but that my mother had thanked Lady Forbes for the favour, and said, as my seeing her agonies could only afflict her son, and would add to her own.



pangs, without answering any purpose, she esteemed it as a blessing from God that Tate was at a distance instead of being present; at the same time imploring every benediction on her son's head from the Almighty, and declaring that her offspring had behaved nobly in his allowance for her comforts of life; and to add to his expences, or imbitter his mind with sorrow, would prevent that peaceful exit to God, which she did not dread, but approached with reverence and hope; awfully relying on his all-gracious mercies, and she felt consolation in her quitting this earthly abode of sorrow: That I was then under the patronage of my Dublin wonderfully good friends, and that she in her son's prosperity had INHERITED the utmost wishes and buildings of her fancy. Lady Forbes honoured me so far as to take every care of the funeral, &c. herself. My mother requested, if it might be granted without any extraordinary expence, to be laid in the vault of the Savoy Chapel, where my father had so many years been a minister; but the Rev. Mr. Wilmot, then my father's successor, refused the grant, unless the expensive fees were complied with, which my good mother had prohibited being acquiesced with on any account, as she thought her husband, who had so long been minister, and a grace and honour to the pulpit as a preacher, her having an elder son



and two daughters in that vault, humanity, charity, pity, and religion, might have granted a wife and mother, of most amiable and virtuous character in every true sense of the word, such a boon: but to the shame of the minister, Christianity, and common feeling, it was denied; and she was decently, and truly mournfully attended by respectable persons, and such true friends as were not ashamed to pay a tribute to a woman of as good qualities as ever exalted or honoured Human Nature.—Were it possible a religious and amiable mind could procure happiness for another in this world, my mother's true prayers and petitions presented at the High Throne of Mercy in my behalf would at this time, with the Almighty's will, have made me one of the most blessed men in this life:—But we should work ourselves and not trust to the labour of others; as the best find that “strait is the gate and narrow is the path which leads to Heaven.”

Mrs. Wilson also delivered me a paper inclosed from Lady Forbes, wrote by my mother to the following effect, which I, replete with grief, thrust into my pocket, being full of distress and agitation, for Nature will be Nature; but her letters to me at Norwich, my last farewell, the epistle to Chester, &c. had in some measure prepared me for an event expected, though not so suddenly; but when



choaked with agony at my last seeing her in London, she had, spirit-like, awfully informed me she should never behold me more; so that altogether they had certainly been preparatives for the greatest loss that can be known, that of an indulgent and good parent. As a son I can repeat with truth that I was dutiful and respectful; but when children slight an affectionate father or mother, they not only give a stab to the parent, but open a sluice in their own hearts for the admittance of every iron corrosive and melancholy quality, the which will to a certainty one day or other soften what was hard and obdurate, and make them truly reflect with Shakspeare——

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is

To have a thankless child.

Indeed misfortune seldom pays a visit alone, but is too often attended by a crowded procession of ills and vexations, which answers one good purpose, as it prepares the mind for submission and a proper resignation to quit a life, which otherwise with health, attended by the gaudy pleasures of the world, Nature tugs and makes us unwillingly give up.

I retired home to Mr. Chaigneau's house in Abbey-street, where I then was till I suited myself with a lodging to my mind, Mr. and Mrs. Chaig-



neau being that winter at Bath. I could not rest, but run over the many good acts my mother had done, and the many sufferings she had undergone; but feeling that truly happy and glowing sensation, the inspiration of the Almighty, that told me I had acted dutifully and right by having supplied her wants, and that her last years were by her confessedly years of happiness and content, it reconciled me to myself; and when the morning gave a sufficient light, I earnestly looked over the paper enclosed to me by Lady Forbes in my mother's hand-writing, great part of it is here inserted:

MY DEAR TATE,

“ HAVING such frequent returns of this giddy  
“ disorder in my head, though well and free from  
“ any complaint at this time, yet I must look upon  
“ these sudden attacks as most proper warnings  
“ that I may resign life in one moment, therefore  
“ leave this short memorandum of my wearing  
“ apparel. I would have you divide it between  
“ Mrs. Judkins and Mrs. Jack:—I mean my  
“ common gowns, linen, and such as may be  
“ proper for them, at your discretion; also such  
“ petticoats, cloaks, &c. as may be warm to that  
“ poor old woman, Mrs. Jack.—I have nothing  
“ worth leaving to my best friends. As you  
“ know them all, if any little thing will be accept-



“able, let the offer come from you, particularly  
“to Mrs. Batt and Mrs. Hutchinson. Whether in  
“sickness or in health I feel no reluctance at  
“quitting this world but the separation from my  
“dearly beloved Tate.—If in my senses my last  
“breath will be imploring God’s blessings for all  
“that is truly good to you, that the same good  
“Providence may still attend you, and that you  
“may ever be defended from all the evils and  
“dangers of the world. I pray God to conduct  
“you through life ; and as I am happy in believ-  
“ing you are blessed with an honest good heart,  
“so doubt not but you will give due attention to  
“the plain and easy duties of religion, which will  
“be the certain way to secure the favour of God  
“both here and hereafter ; where may we meet to  
“live for ever in heaven, through the merits of  
“Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

“I desire no mark of folly or ridiculous pride  
“may attend me to my bed of dust ; plain and  
“decent as possible ; neither any dressed up cata-  
“logue of virtues in the news. I am at this in-  
“stant well, calm, cheerful, and happy ; in good  
“health and spirits, and, whilst in this world,

“Your most tender

“And affectionate mother,

“G. WILKINSON.”



That day I kept closely at home ; but as soon as I was mournfully equipped, and could appear with decency, I went abroad. After what had passed with Mr. Mossop, Mr. Jefferson insisted on my not appearing in the streets without a sword, which I complied with. Those who know me will laugh when they figure to themselves Wilkinson in a black scratch wig parading Dublin streets with a glaring silver-hilted sword :—To those who do not recollect or know me, I refer to Mrs. Bellamy's description in her 6th volume.—She says, “ I will here take the opportunity of adding a short description of the figure, manner, and deportment of the gentleman who had been the subject of the foregoing anecdote. His person is tall, his countenance rather sportive than beautiful, and his manners agreeable. As to his theatrical talents, they are far above the common rank ; he has infinite merit in comedy, and excels in mimicry.

His first appearance was in Dublin in the year 1757, where he remained till the following year. He joined the Edinburgh company in 1764, during the time I had a share in the management of it ; where, by his unremitted application and great merit in every line of the drama, he rendered himself a valuable acquisition to the community. To sum up the whole of his character in a few words,



he has always been justly admired as an actor, beloved as a man, and esteemed as a friend."

Well said, Mrs. Bellamy, THAT I read much more palatably than the *unasked opinion* of Mr. Stephen Kemble, who honoured me with the following from Exeter :

" My apothecary at Exeter, who is one of the best creatures in the world, and never charges for his physic, says, he remembers you at Exeter when you was a handsome looking young fellow !!—I said I thought he must be mistaken in the person, or that at all events it must have been long ago !—Indeed there is a particular time of life when every body looks well at least, if not handsome.—Though I must confess he is the only person whom I ever heard connect the word handsome with Tate Wilkinson !!—For my part I think you as ugly as any subject in his Majesty's dominions :—But as I observed before it might be then your well-looking time.

" This paragraph, for fear you should think me impertinent, I shall not sign Kemble, but

" V E R I T A S."

I should have imagined Mr. Kemble's letter meant rudely, but that it contained matter of importance to him and me, being no less than the foundation for a treaty that was afterwards nego-



tiating seriously for all my theatrical property; but that gentleman not approving what I asked, and myself not relishing by any means the sums he offered, the matter dropped after a few weeks consideration. Mrs. Wilkinfon has seen, luckily for me, with my eyes, not Mr. Kemble's, which undoubtedly is *a blessing to herself*.

Digression is so natural to my disposition, it is in vain for me to attempt correcting it, so little are we acquainted with our own peculiarities. I had not known a wandering imagination possessed me in so strong a degree, had not Mr. Robertson, late of the York company, (in high estimation as a worthy, well-educated, sensible man, and was a most excellent comedian) frequently warned me of it in my memoirs. So a stranger need only take up Mr. Foote's comedy of the Cozeners, and in Mr. Aircastle, as drawn by that gentleman, he will find a strong trait of Tate Wilkinfon.—The following lines of Mr. Aircastle's are a specimen, and I often have recourse to that comedy for a peep at my own singularities.

### The COZENERS.

“Aye, aye! you officers play the very deuce when you come down into the country. I remember Ensign Sash about ten years ago—his father came from Barbadoes—I met him at Trea-



cle's the great sugar-baker's, who had a house in St. Mary Axe—he took the lease from Alderman Gingham, who served sheriff with Deputy — There was tight work on the hustings.—Though when I first came to the Temple there was a lawyer's wife that lived in Quality-Court that I was exceedingly fond of.—Her husband came home one night, and I crept under the bed, where I should have remained concealed but for a little dog of Charles's breed; he went bow, wow, wow. Indeed a man and wife to quarrel before folks is rather rudish. I own by ourselves, indeed, it is a pretty innocent amusement enough. Tom Test of our town used to say his wife was a Devonshire girl, if I am not mistaken, from Plymouth. There by the bye they have the best John Dorees in England. Old Quin, one summer went thither on purpose."

When the gloom of the melancholy event, and my natural reveries had subsided, I went eagerly to work in preparing the Rehearsal, and myself in Bayes. When I first acted it at Crowstreet, I gave a likeness of Mossop in the lines of—"So boar and sow when any storm is nigh, &c."—which being well executed of course had good effect.

In act the third, where I was correcting an actor, I hit off some words and directions pointedly



in the manner of my friend Mr. Macklin, not supposing but he would laugh at it, as he had often encouraged me to proceed with my mischievous tricks, and I used to entertain him with such matter:—It was immediately noticed and well taken. The next day Mr. Barry sent for me to give me information that Mr. Macklin, armed *cap à pè* on horseback, had called on him, and addressed him in the following words:—"Sir, I hear Wilkinson took some liberty with my manner of acting last night on your theatre: I do not trouble myself about the boy, for every affront or joke passed on your stage I shall look upon as authorised by you; and if such a practice is again repeated or attempted, I shall seriously expect you to answer for it." Barry assured him he might depend on Mr. Wilkinson's being informed of his complaint, and might rest satisfied no repetition of the sort should be again exhibited. On which Mr. Macklin remounted his rosinante, and like Don Quixote, having killed his puppet giant, he returned in triumph. Mr. Barry informed me he had pawned his honour as surety I would not be a naughty boy a second time. "Now, my dear Wilkinson," added Barry, smiling, "I beg you will be observant, and let me really depend on your not drawing me into a scrape, particularly as I hint to you I think Macklin will come to church



again ;” which the next season actually happened, as he once more acted his Sir Archy to Barry’s Sir Callaghan, which was excellent. I re-affured Mr. Barry he need not urge seriously what was my wish to comply with, as for Mr. Macklin I retained the highest regard, and he had ever been kind and improving me by his advice and observations : and I really believe had Mr. Macklin been present he would have laughed instead of being offended ; but Fame, increasing as she goes, had formed the trifle I had done, ere it reached Mr. Macklin, into a story perhaps as ridiculous as false, and probably formed to the size of enormity, and there that matter rested.

But with Mr. Mossop I really had no mercy ; and though he was confessedly an actor of merit and wonderful powers, the most melodious clear voice I ever heard, take it for all in all, yet his manner was so peculiar, that I fear as I got fame at his expence, I rather decreased than increased his ; as it certainly led several enthusiastic admirers to distinguish foibles and oddities not before so discernible. I really did expect, in consequence of the great freedoms I had taken, Mr. Mossop would certainly have called me to an account, and daily apprehended I should have a message or visit.



Mr. Jefferson, now at Exeter, who loved a little mischief, said to him one day, "Sir, I was last night at Crow-street, where Wilkinson, in Tragedy A-la-Mode and in Bayes, had taken very great liberties indeed; and added, that the audience were ill-natured enough to be highly entertained;" on which Mossop snuffed the air, put his hand on his sword, and turning upon his heel, replied, "Yes, Sir, but he only takes *me off a lit—tle*," and made his angry departure. After which Jefferson never again renewed the subject, but was astonished, after his repeated and open threats of vengeance, he had not acted more consistently: And after the said Mr. Jefferson's telling me that circumstance, I never heard more of Mr. Mossop's sword, pistol, or anger.

I played a great number of nights with Mr. Barry that season, and had a lucrative second engagement, as my first finished December 19. I acted repeatedly Wolsey, Oakly, Tragedy A-la-Mode, Cadwallader, Bayes, &c.—And when Mr. Sheridan that winter, who had not been seen from the time of his banishment, occasioned by Barry's and Woodward's opposition, his long absence, and a general respect being paid him, gave success to Barry, and a severe blow to Mossop, as he had then lost every tragic support, Mrs. Fitzhenry having returned once more to Crow-street, and



Mrs. Abington was engaged in London. Mossop's only support was Mr. Macklin's Shylock, Love A-la-Mode, &c.; and Miss Catley, who then occasioned much conversation and fashion, gave the old Beggar's Opera a new run, and allured several audiences; Macklin acted Peachum. But Mr. Sheridan, not having performed in Dublin from his desertion in 1758 till late in the year 1763, made him not only, from grateful and honourable feelings well received (for the well-known injuries he had sustained as a gentleman, and more so from malevolent party and prejudice, as the darling actor of the hearts in general of that metropolis:—Not that I should have voted or assigned the chair of Roscius (to speak candidly) in favour of Mr. Sheridan against Barry or Mossop, particularly not against the former.—Mr. Sheridan drew several overflowing houses:—He acted Hamlet, his established particular character, for his benefit by the universal desire of his friends, and he actually sent a card to me requesting I would oblige him by studying the Apprentice (which I had never played) for his night, which I agreed to with pleasure, as I ever held Mr. Sheridan respectable; and indeed the consequence turned out an obligation to myself, as my performing that character (though immediately after the merit of the justly admired Wood-



ward) was not only much relished, but perpetually called for, and in London the ensuing season did wonders for me, and might be termed my *chef d'oeuvre* there. Mr. Mossop I did not neglect when I was in my apprenticeship:—And, strange to tell—but men are men, the best sometimes forget—Mr. Sheridan came to return me thanks for the favour, and to wish me joy of my applause, and rejoicingly told me all his friends were particularly pleased, and himself had been highly entertained with my strong likenesses of Mr. Mossop. Here is a striking instance of Human Nature; for if the reader will but turn his memory round to my first winter in Ireland, he will recollect how more than pointedly austere Mr. Sheridan was against mimicry and me, with his particular severity on jokes and freedoms of that nature.

My benefit was on Monday, December 19, 1763.—The Mourning Bride: Osmyn, by Mr. Barry; the King, by Mr. Wilkinson; Zara, by Mrs. Fitzhenry; Almeria, by Mrs. Dancer:—With, by particular desire, The Prodigal's Return, in the manner of the original; Tragedy A-la-Mode; also Fielding's Pleasures of the Town, or the Puppet Shew.—The bills passed Mr. Barry's ordeal, and naturally may be supposed to have been quartered upon three parts of the Dublin inhabitants, besides all my boxes being taken by my



friends and the public, and the great call for tickets made them more universally dispersed. This, if you are a theatrical reader, I beg you will notice was the very winter Woodward had broke his connection as manager with Barry, and had spoken his prologue, of the Prodigal returned at London, and had been received with open arms, at his former residence of Elysium. That Prologue, if I had properly considered, certainly was a dangerous and wanton undertaking, and therefore should have required thought, as it indubitably might have drawn me into a predicament which, if taken offensively, might to a certainty have turned out so serious, that all my friends combined, could not have extricated me from the bad consequences, as offence is sooner conceived than forgiven; and too many people like being offended to gratify, by such opportunity, their darling spleen and ill-nature: and even acquaintances are liable to sway with the opinion of the multitude to prove their impartiality; which often makes luke-warm friends the most dangerous of enemies that can be conceived, as their desertion is made subservient by artful insinuations to become useful *for base purposes*.

About five days before my benefit, Mr. Barry called on me in great perturbation, and said, Mr. Woodward had informed him by letter, that in



London, on looking over the Dublin Journal, he to his astonishment had seen his Prodigal prologue advertised to be spoken by Mr. Wilkinson, and in his manner :—That he expected and requested to have that part of the bill expunged, as it might greatly injure him, and he also judged it a service of danger to Mr. Wilkinson :—He made a point of it the more as he intended (he added) to perform a few nights in the spring on his own stage in Crow-street, and he feared Mr. Wilkinson's whim might have a perilous tendency. I felt the force of truth, and not meaning injury, should have been unhappy to have occasioned any. My bills were immediately altered, and what Mr. Woodward had surmised to be offensive was directly taken out; and its not being in the future bills, great or small I never thought more of what I considered merely as a trifling matter.

That night, December 23, (though I had been honoured with many good ones) notwithstanding Mr. and Mrs. Chaigneau were absent, was the best I ever had in Dublin, the receipt being 180 l. The last music was called about the usual time, and was playing to that bumper of a house, which finished, and the curtain rising to melting notes; and as Mrs. Dancer was impatiently expecting her usual plaudits from every hand, stick, and voice, the contrary burst forth with most horrid din and



vociferation, and to her astonishment the universal cry was—"Off! off!—Wilkinson! Wilkinson! Woodward's prologue," &c. Mrs. Dancer attempted to courtesy and speak, but all in vain; she was compelled to retire, full of grief, rage, shame, anger, and vexation:—For my part I was dressed all trim for his Majesty, and thinking to command as a king and not be commanded. I was petrified like Lord Ogleby, and almost distilled to jelly by my fears: Barry summoned me in high rage, and the audience continued all the while in tumult. Mrs. Dancer flew into a violent passion for what she had sustained on my account. Barry said, he was certain I had wilfully occasioned the riot, and planted persons to call for the prologue. I replied, on my honour, that I had strictly obeyed his commands, and from the moment he had mentioned my not doing it I never more gave the fatal prologue a thought; and urged, what was truth, that my very dress for the king of Portugal made my assertions evident: therefore Mr. Glover (late Dr. Glover, in Fleet-street) who was then engaged as an actor, with Mr. Barry's directions went forward, and after much bowing, intreating, &c. was at length suffered to inform them that Mr. Wilkinson was then dressed for the King, and actually was not prepared for the prologue, it having been judged improper in the highest degree, and



purposely omitted, not only in the bills of the day, but for the whole week past\*: Therefore Mr. Barry and Mr. Wilkinson respectfully hoped the omission would be pardoned, approved, and excused. The answer was not only universal, but as if one determined voice—"No! no! no!—No play! no play! No benefit unless he speaks the prologue." Barry began then to be seriously alarmed, as it bore the marks of determination not to be trifled with; he alledged, so situated, Mr. Woodward himself could not be angry when properly informed, and said, "Well, Wilkinson, I do not blame you—I see evidently it is a formed party of angry enemies against Woodward, so speak the prologue as well as you can." Mr. Glover then informed the audience I would speak the prologue, and endeavour to recollect it against the finish of the play, but "No, no!" was the cry and answer—"The prologue now, or no play." I felt myself in a situation very alarming: I had no alternative; and really not having attended to the prologue after giving up every idea of it, to recollect what I had conned over was very difficult, having never spoke it, nor having the least imagination of its ever being such a serious matter of contention.—Once more Mr. Glover was deputed, and underwent a peal of groans and hisses; but

\* Benefits were then advertised three weeks before the Night.



being again permitted to be heard, he said, if they would honour Mr. Wilkinſon with the indulgence of a few minutes to change his dreſs and collect himſelf, he would exert his abilities, and ſpeak the prologue as well as he was capable. The theatre reſounded approbation, and “Yes, yes—bravo! bravo!”—I do not think in any dramatic occurrence I ever was ſo truly overpowered: I took a half pint of Madeira, and that aſſiſtance, before I thought of the prologue, actually inſpired me to repeat theſe lines:—

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Valour ſoars above  
What the world calls miſfortune and affliction:  
Theſe are not ills, elſe would they never fall  
On Heaven’s firſt favourites and the beſt of men.  
The gods in bounty work up ſtorms about us,  
That give mankind occaſion to exert  
Their hidden ſtrength, and throw out into practice  
Virtues which ſhun the day, and lie concealed  
In the ſmooth ſeaſons and the calms of life.

The above alluſion was conceited, but I was young, and the whim ſtruck my fancy. The idea of conſequence I had agreeably placed myſelf in by that repetition, however ſtrutting and fantaſtical, aided by the good heartening Madeira, tuned my mind to ſome degree of compoſure: I ſtripped with alacrity, and put on an old grey frock, a pair of blue boot ſtockings, my ſcratch wig, &c. and



quickly transformed myself; and thus equipped, with hat in hand, advanced to take the field: but however, quick as I had been, the patience of the audience were tired, and suspecting more imposition, as they termed it, let me know they were all there; and I naturally conceived they had not entirely forgot my slip mentioned in 1762, when they promised retaliation, which perhaps might have conspired to render the said mentioned prologue considered as a matter of more moment than otherwise it would have been: However, I was certainly the unlucky *Busy Body*. The music played, and the bell at last was rung: They were soon all seated, and silence loudly proclaimed. Be it observed, that Mr. Woodward, when he spoke that prologue first at Covent Garden, after an absence of a few years, popped his head on the stage from the door, drew himself hastily away as if ashamed of being such a prodigal son as to leave his good friends and not know when he was well. He next crept on by the curtain, peeping, and then hiding his face again till he attained the centre of the stage, which was wittingly conceived, and had a happy effect. So on my approach that night I practised the same manœuvre, but as in imitation of Woodward, and not owing to my own bright thought: The audience on my first approach, and drawing back as above de-



scribed, half hissed—half applauded: but on my second and third advance, a-la-mode Woodward, the approbation arose to a degree equal almost to Woodward's reception at Covent Garden; for they apprehended all my acted modesty was a *natural* impromptu, and a tacit confession of shame for keeping them so long waiting, and having meant artfully to deprive them of that part of the evening's entertainment, they were determined to hear, and all in compliance to the bashaw order of the manager: however, my pardon was fully proclaimed long before I spoke, by peals of laughter and applause, and I felt very differently from the hour before that pleasing altered situation; and what is no more strange than true, they with infinite good humour approved almost every line of the prologue, as if it had been calculated to compliment the Dublin audience, instead of the contrary; and I may venture to say Mr. Woodward was certainly to blame when he wrote and spoke it:—

But men in rage strike those who love them best.

For though he might be right in sound judgment to return to London, he could easily have studied means to have paid court, and obtained pardon and support on his going back to the station where he had formerly been for many years an established favourite, without inconsiderately and un-



gratefully throwing reflections on those who had ever respected his worth as a man, and his merit as an actor of eminence. His view in quitting London was gain, as was his returning; and he was like to stand the hazard of that die, he himself had purposely thrown. As I have said so much relative to the prologue, I will here insert it, and I hope not with impropriety.

BEHOLD! the prodigal *return'd*—quite *tame*—  
 And (though you'll hardly think it) full of *shame*:  
*Asham'd*! so long t'have left my patrons here—  
 On random schemes—the Lord knows *what* and *where*!  
 —With *piteous* face (long stranger to a *grin*)  
 Receive the *penitent*—and let him in!  
 Forgive his *errors*—ope the *friendly* door;  
 And then he's *your's* 1\*—and *your's* 2—and *your's* 3—as  
 heretofore.

—Ye Gods! what havock does *ambition* make—  
*Ambition* drove me to the grand mistake!  
*Ambition*! made me *mad* enough to roam—  
 But, now, I feel (with joy) that *home* is *home*—  
 Faith! they put *powder* in my drink, d'ye see?  
 Or else, by *Pharaoh's* foot, it could not be!  
 Belike Queen *Mab* toucht me (at full o' th' moon)  
 With a *Field Marshal Manager's* battoon—  
 And so I dreamt of *riches*—*honour*—*pow'r*—  
 'Twas but a *dream* tho'—and that *dream* is o'er—  
 How happy now I walk my native ground;  
*Above*—*below*—nay! faith—all round and round,

\* 1, 2, 3, Pit, Boxes, Galleries.



I guess some pleasures in your bosoms burn;  
 To see the *Prodigal* poor *son* return—  
 Perhaps I'm *vain* tho', and the case mistake;  
 No—no—yes—yes—for old acquaintance sake,  
 Some gen'rous, hospitable, smiles you'll send—  
 Besides! I *own* my faults and mean to *mend*—  
 Oh, ho! \* they ring—how *sweet* that sound appears,  
 After an absence of four *tiresome* years—  
*Marplot*, to night—so says the *bill of fare*! †  
 Now waits your pleasure, with his *usual* air—  
 Oh! may I *act* the part still *o'er* and *o'er*!  
 But never BE the BUSY BODY more.

I thought all that prologue business well over,  
 and was to play Cardinal Wolsey shortly after—  
 Queen Catherine, Mrs. Fitzhenry; (as Mr. Foote  
 had sent Barry over the new farce of the Mayor  
 of Garratt it occasioned me a second engagement  
 with him for ten nights more). On my entrance  
 as the Cardinal, to my astonishment there was an  
 universal cry for Woodward's prologue, nor would  
 they let me or the play proceed till I advanced and  
 said, "Gentlemen, as soon as I am dead I will  
 certainly speak it." The oddity of my Irish blun-  
 der set them into a laugh, and all was right till  
 the play was over, then it was not forgot, but for  
 fear I should give them the slip was loudly called  
 for.

\* The warning-bell rings. † Pointing to a play-bill.



In a few days the Mayor of Garratt was ready, which, with puffing and extracts from the London papers, brought a crowded house. I was equipped exactly in Mr. Foote's manner for Major Sturgeon, and pleased myself with the effect my figure would have on my first entrance as the Major; for the piece being quite new, was a feather in my cap, and I was in high spirits on the occasion; but notwithstanding the novelty and expectation of much entertainment from the new farce, no sooner was the curtain drawn up than that cursed unfortunate and tormenting prologue was again called for by every body, and "Wilkinson!—Prologue! prologue! Wilkinson!" resounded from every part of the theatre.—A person not acquainted with the stage may perhaps not think this any particular hardship, but an actor will feel it to be, as I myself found it, really a piece of ill fortune, and very distressing. Let any brother comedian suppose himself well-dressed for a remarkable character dependent partly on that dress, and that the first night too of a new comedy, in which he expected fame and profit, and one half the effect depending on his first appearance.—But this prologue they would have—I refused—but was obliged to go on and plead:—All arguing was in vain; and what was worse, in that prologue I was to complain of want and penury, &c. and should



have been in a very indifferent dress; yet they wished me to speak it with a stuffed belly, rosy cheeks, and in a great pair of French boots: No remonstrances would avail—I urged my boots as an excuse, but they only laughed aloud and said, “Never mind, Major, speak it in your boots.”—I thought some planet had unwitted men—I was obliged to submit, and was so far in character (as the Prodigal) that I felt more inclined to cry than laugh. After that disagreeable ceremony the farce proceeded on, was highly received, and acted six or seven nights, but never without their favourite prologue, let me have acted what I would; nay, had I played Lady Townly or Juliet, I am certain I must have spoke it. However, custom reconciles many disagreeable things in life, which at first appear not only disgusting but painful; so this prologue, by use, I at length repeated perfectly easy, let me be dressed as I would; and as “what must be, must be,” I was prepared for the summons. Barry wished me to continue, as he urged I was much more established there, as a performer, than at any other period; and that favour from the public at large without being in the least dependent on my particular friends: yet things happen so contradictory, that it must appear strange to say, that the trifling prologue had so teized me, it was the only time I ever quitted Dublin with-



out regret, and at the very period I loved that place the most. At the end of January 1764, I left that city, and took my route the north road by Drogheda, Newry, Carrickfergus, and Belfast, to Donogadee.

But before I take leave of the prologue business entirely, I must beg permission to give the sequel and catastrophe to it, and I hope I shall be forgiven for my tautology and tediousness respecting it.

Mr. Woodward went over to Ireland late in the spring season 1764:—he was advertised to play; and, to secure his former footing, his first appearance was announced for a public charity benefit; when a rumour was whispered, and of course soon circulated, about Mr. Woodward's prodigal prologue, spoken in London at Covent Garden theatre, and so often repeated by Wilkinson to the audience in Dublin during the winter months of playing. It may be readily conjectured that foolish business was not a little pushed forwards by the opposite interests connected with the Mossopian theatre; and actors can, in spite of nature, now and then give a lift to irritation and spleen in public taverns, &c. particularly if things are not agreeable to themselves at the time. Not but there are as worthy and superior minds of both sexes to be found in a theatre as in any other set of people whatever: but when we judge in gene-



ral of mankind, wo be to the safety of those who trust their security, in the state of reliance, on humanity, honour, and good-nature:—though it is said charity covereth a multitude of sins, yet Woodward's coat of mail and merit on this occasion would not avail; it was not only penetrable stuff, but furiously threatened with assassination on all sides, as they judged it a flimsy pretext to hide or conceal a conscientiousness of his fault, and a gross affront to the city of Dublin at large.

The playing for a charity for his first appearance, was a poor subterfuge, and made bad worse, as they all knew his real view and intent was profit; they therefore termed that a paltry evasion, and a tacit confession of guilt and fear, and on the day of his intended performance, the said prologue was actually printed as spoken by the *grateful* Henry Woodward; therefore all the lines they had noted when I spoke it, they locked safe in the volumes of their brains, and such as they took to be offensive and affrontive were marked in the fresh printed ones in Italics—here *potatoes*, another line *turnips*, and at last *banished from those boards*.—The matter wore so serious an aspect, that Mr. Woodward and his friends thought it prudent and advisable for him to decline playing there that night, or any other; on that he speedily retreated, not making his appearance even in the streets for fear of being



insulted, nor did he ever visit Ireland to play again.

I am vexed at relating this, because it was occasioned by a foolish wantonness on my part, attended with perplexity and vexation to myself, and followed with such serious consequences to Mr. Woodward, as never could have entered my head.—It hurt me the more, as I really regarded him much :—it occasioned a great coolness and ironical distance between us for an interval, which was natural and unavoidable : But reflection and time made us reconciled, and restored us not only to our former acquaintance, but to a much stronger intimacy than before, and a sincere friendship which truly continued till that moment which separates king and people, husband and wife, father and son—and all the world.

Mr. Woodward was a gentleman of true worth, and not undeserving the sigh of any person, however exalted, as he undoubtedly was an honourable member of society, and an actor, while within memory, whose merits cannot, *must not*, be forgotten : His Marplot, Bobadil, and Flash, will be for years enrolled in stage history.

I now must travel to Donogadee, and from thence to Edinburgh; but I was obliged to continue three or four days, the wind not answering directly for Scottish steerage—the distance I guess



is nearly the same as between Dover and Calais, or perhaps rather more; packets appointed by Government have now rendered that passage more commodious and safe, and traverse to and fro in regular course, which affords great temptations to ladies and gentlemen not fond of a sea voyage. When I unluckily adventured over in the depth of winter, it was in a storm, accompanied by snow with all its horrid attendants, and in an open wherry; no shelter whatever from the inclemency of weather; the sailors all drunk; twenty pigs and sows, with horses, and a methodist preacher: Whether he or the possessed swine raised the tempest I cannot determine—I rather suppose the Fates. However, we rushed on the rocks on the opposite shore, which is remarkably rugged, with a force that seemed to me astonishing: they said it was the usual manner of landing at Port Patrick! Indeed, though I was six hours, the passage in general I believe is performed in less time, and I am informed is rendered pleasant and convenient for the weary traveller; and besides these allurements, its shortness and an almost certainty of safety, an accident being seldom heard of: but mine was an instance to encourage wayfarers to pass that way, as then conveniences were never thought of:—The wherry in the storm almost guided itself—a drunken crew—no shelter from



the severity of climate—yet the actor, the preacher, the sailors, the fows and pigs, horses, &c. all arrived safe on the Scotch shore. If the escape was owing to the particular good qualities of the medley grouse, I fear the drunken sailors would have the superior claim allowed to them, as they undisguised exposed their unthinking folly, while it was possible the methodist and the dramatic were both actors: had a Jew been in the boat, he would probably have imputed the storm to the herd of swine.

I do confess, without asking belief, I was glad of a supper in an hut called an inn, and to get a night's rest there; that said hut is now transformed to a decent place of reception for strangers. There was not at that period a tolerable road, or any regular track for near forty miles, nor any mode of travelling but on little starved horses and a wild guide to Glasgow; now there are post-chaises.—However, I accomplished my journey on horseback in two days, the first night to Aire, the second to Glasgow; it rained heavily, and was accompanied with hail, snow, and every concomitant severe weather could give: I felt much for the guide who carried my luggage, but he appeared perfectly contented, whilst I seemed ready to give up the ghost; but the beholding the spires of the noble



city of Glasgow recruited my almost exhausted spirits, till by dint of labour I at last, about ten at night, arrived in that truly elegant built city:—It was far superior to Edinburgh, and has greatly improved; but in point of rapid grandeur in building and improvements Edinburgh has given Glasgow a Somerset surprise, so as to baffle all comparison, and now stands foremost as one of the most beautiful corporate towns in Europe.

I was truly ill when I got to the Bull Inn, and actually from fatigue extended myself on the carpet before the fire; but good wine, good supper, good bed, good every thing, made me feel in heaven. Next day I took a post-chaise, and in the evening reached Edinburgh, and stopped at an inn in the Grass Market, very indifferent indeed in every respect as to accommodation or neatness, which gave me a bad opinion of the capital city of Scotland.

Edinburgh is romantically and pleasantly situated; indeed more so than can be imagined or described; nor has even Bath, or any other town or city within my knowledge, made such rapid strides towards improvement as the new town of Edinburgh. The new streets, hotels, superb squares, &c. are astonishing; but, added to all those elegancies, in the winter season the town is well lighted throughout. This description will make



a narrow-minded Cockney stare who thinks green peas were never seen in Scotland, and supposes all the inhabitants live on barley-broth, haggais, and crowdy, and has confirmed his notions by surmising Edinburgh to be a dirty, mean place; but if he will travel and take a peep, it will open his eyes, and make him confess with surprise, astonishment, and conviction, that it with justice lays claim to being placed in a station that evinces superiority, and demands a rank as a city of eminence, admiration, consequence, and distinction: In point of elegance and spirit, there is no such city in the kingdom of Great Britain, except London and Bath. But, reader, observe, Edinburgh was not in the state I have been endeavouring to describe when I first arrived there in Feb. 1764: It was then merely confined to the old town, and destitute of many of those elegancies it now possesses—to a degree of luxury and extravagance in every respect. On my setting down at Edinburgh I neither had engagement nor acquaintance with any person whatever, theatrical or otherwise, but had gone there at hap hazard, and removed myself four hundred miles from London into a strange country, and took that wonderful circumbendibus to North Britain uninvited, merely from my own whim and inclination:—but on inquiry was highly pleased to find my old friend



Mrs. Bellamy was there, with whom I had not only dined at Mr. Calcraft's, when she lived in Parliament-street, but had been on an intimacy for years by seeing her constantly as a visitor at Lady Tyrawley's, at Somerset-House, near the Savoy, who regarded Mrs. Bellamy much as a supposed natural daughter of Lord Tyrawley's, though his Lordship had proved a false mate to his wedded lady; who, though a woman of high sense and breeding could not boast of any personal attraction, as she was short-sighted, squinted, and was in her person rather bordering on the extravagance of caricature, but was friendly, generous, sensible, and humane, and ever honoured my father and mother as a constant kind companion and good neighbour. She possessed more of Cibber's Lady Dainty in respect to cats, dogs, and monkeys, than any other that ever came within the scope of my discernment. Indeed her apartments at Somerset-House were truly disagreeable to enter, and when in not without some danger or apprehension at least from the variety of animals, as there were loose monkeys and a file of yelping dogs to pass before one could get to the room and then to a chair; and an affront to any one of those favourites was truly so to her ladyship, and not to be forgiven:—there were never



less than three or four monkeys dressed in regimentals, or as fine ladies and gentlemen.—But no pen, however able, can possibly exaggerate her propensity to this tribe, as if selected against a second flood. On Mrs. Bellamy's knowing me so long by meetings at Lady Tyrawley's, &c. I was no sooner announced in Scotland than most friendly received, and a general *insisted* invitation to make a home of her house and Mr. Bellamy's (alias Digges), at Bonnington, during my stay in Edinburgh: It is a pleasant village situated little more than a mile from the town, but now I dare say nearly connected by the additional streets and buildings. Mr. Digges was certainly the most polite gentleman in the world to his ladies, and not choosng to have Mrs. Digges's name in the bills, (for living together in Scotland constitutes a marriage while in that kingdom) he most graciously exchanged his name of Digges for Bellamy; also, let that lady perform whatever character she would, she was always placed at the head of the bill; as for instance:—This day Romeo and Juliet: *Juliet, Mrs. Bellamy; Romeo, Mr. Bellamy.*—On being introduced into the green room I met with little neat Mrs. Mozeen, my Portsmouth Desdemona, 1758, who by the name of Edwards had been bred carefully up, and in-



roduced to the London audience by Mrs. Clive, who was so partial to her adoption, that she for the first time gave up Polly, which she would not do to Mrs. Cibber, and acted Lucy, (which was beyond compare) on producing her own taught Polly: but Mrs. Mozeen's powers were weak, and she fell by tasting the apple like her mother eve, and the chaste, the comical, the enraged Clive discarded her, and resumed Polly herself, and let her pupil down the wind to prey on Fortune.

Mrs. Mozeen, whom I believe I have mentioned as being a favourite actress at Portsmouth in 1758, was at Edinburgh 1764, under the wings of a long tall Northumberland manager of Edinburgh, whose name was *Dowson*, cojointly with a Mr. Bates. Edinburgh Dowson had, like a true *louvre*, sacrificed all his business and good situation at Newcastle to prostrate himself with offerings of incense and gaudy mock trappings of false silver and gold lace at the feet of his theatrical princess, which at last ended in his wilful ruin.— This was in the time of the old theatre in Cannongate, long before the present new one (or even the New Town) was either built or thought on.— Mrs. Mozeen had a plurality of lovers, and always put me in mind of Shakespear's lines:—



Behold yon simpering lady, she who starts at  
Pleasure's name, and thinks her ear prophaned with  
The least wanton word ; wou'd you believe it? &c.

And so it was with that lady ; for at the least  
sudden joke she blushed to such a degree as to give  
the beholder pain for an offence not meant or in-  
tended.

A Miss Wordly also was there, whom Mrs.  
Bellamy has mentioned in her apology as being  
termed the *Goddeſs of Nonſenſe*, as a compliment to  
her being remarkably the contrary : But there my  
friend Bellamy forgot herself, as indeed she often  
tripped with her memory, for Miss Wordly was  
called the *Goddeſs of Nonſenſe* by acting that part for  
my benefit in a farce of Fielding's, entitled, *The  
Pleasures of the Town*, and was so christened by  
Mr. Aickin, who was then in Edinburgh, in high  
and deserved estimation, and with whom I had  
the satisfaction of *many, many* happy days, or ra-  
ther evenings, (not omitting our Scotch pint of  
claret, and neither of us averse to Madeira—to the  
latter I then and now give the preference,) parti-  
cularly recollecting one hour's laugh with him on  
my nearly breaking my neck by a fall into the  
coal cellar. I could have prophesied he would,  
from his spirited manner then, have been more  
fortunate, if properly supported, on his first onset  
in London in an animated and lively line ; but it



may be better as it is, for he is now playing what he might at this time have had to study; as years will creep (which neither Aickin nor Wilkinfon can prevent); therefore it makes his present time the more easy and pleasant, and "All is well that ends well," is a good motto for us stage players.

The third day of my being in Edinburgh I had a card of invitation from Mr. Dowson and Mr. David Bates, managers, to sup with them at a tavern: I was entertained very respectfully; and in the course of casual conversation Mr. Dowson (who was the monied manager just then) asked me what terms I required for eight or ten nights? said, they could not afford any thing extravagant, as I had come uninvited (which should never be done) and at the very prime part of the season when they wanted not any foreign aid: Besides, Mr. Dowson said, (and with truth) Mr. and Mrs. Bellamy were towers of strength. I easily surmised by that conversation they meant to be very courtier-like and civil, but wanted not any engagement that was likely to cost them any thing. I found I had undertaken an expensive tedious journey, merely on speculation, and condemned myself as having acted wrong in so doing, and really thought I might as well have been lucratively paid at that time by Mr. Barry, who had had me at his bedside requesting me to stay a



month longer in Dublin, even though I had been made to speak Woodward's prologue against the grain; for Mr. Barry then wanted every assistance, he being confined by a rheumatism few persons experienced equally painful as himself. The Scotch managers and I parted very civilly, but no hint of terms for an engagement on either side:—The day following at dinner with Mr. Digges, or Mr. Bellamy—which ever appellation the reader likes best,—I informed him and his lady what had passed, and that it had determined me to quit Scotland immediately. Mrs. Bellamy replied, that what the managers had told me was the exact state of facts as they then stood: “And,” said she, “as Mr. Bellamy and myself are concerned in the *profits* in one interest; and as we settle all the plays, we do not want you Mr. Wilkinson, as it is evident you have thrown yourself into their power if you play at all; and if not, you have no alternative but to depart and make better use of your time, as you certainly can; for Bates and Dowson undoubtedly think as you are on the spot you will not neglect any decent engagement. But, my friend Tate,” continued she, “you are sure I wish you well from my long knowledge of you; and if you will for once depend on my advice, and stay over Saturday or Monday next, a wonderful change may



happen in the movements of the theatrical machine that will astonish Bates and Dowson, and you may command your own terms; at present they are sure they can do without you, but Sunday next will cause a contrary opinion." I was much surprised, and begged Mrs. Bellamy to be explicit. "Why," said she, "Tate, I will prove myself explicit and honourable to you, as I can rely on your secrecy:—There is a law in force in Scotland, that if any person whatever is in debt, and known to be quitting the kingdom, they can arrest, even on a Sunday, on oath being first made. Mr. Digges is much involved here, and is so unfortunately circumstanced at this juncture that he cannot possibly continue longer, without loss of liberty,—On Saturday night Mr. Digges will, on some pretext, get all the cash he can from Mr. Still the treasurer:—Dowson is not destitute of property, and must pay the actors:—Mr. Digges will by Sunday night be secretly and securely conveyed out of their reach, and safe on the other side the Tweed, in Old England:—On Monday Bates and Dowson will be in the utmost consternation, and their only relief will be that of requesting your assistance."—The event turned out, exactly as Mrs. Bellamy's secret advice had painted; and on the prophesied Monday they were obliged to offer me,



unasked, two clear benefits, who a week before would not have given one without the charges being duly paid into their coffers instead of my purse.

The Minor was first resolved on; next the Mayor of Garratt; both were quite new.—Mrs. Cole was rather thought improper, also Dr. Squintum, as touching on matters there judged too serious:—but I was very fashionable, and all was right; but Major Sturgeon was the favourite.—I acted in various plays and farces, from Richard, Bayes, &c. to the Lyar; in short I played many good parts, and was received with candour and much approbation. Mrs. Bellamy had two benefits, and both much honoured in the compliments they paid her on those nights.—Her first was the Funeral:—I acted Trim; Mrs. Bellamy, Lady Brumpton; Campley, Mr. Aickin.—Her second night was the Orphan of China: Zamti, Mr. Wilkinfon; Etan, Mr. Aickin; Mandane, Mrs. Bellamy: Hamet was to have been acted by Mr. Collins, who has given the public at London, and elsewhere, much entertainment by his Brush; he was taken ill; and the part was obliged to be substituted by Mr. Creswick's good-naturally reading that character. The accident not only hurt the play but Mr. Collins, as Mrs. Bellamy, in an acrimonious apology and manner, re-



presented to the audience that Mr. Collins purposely distressed the representation, and in plain terms told them nought but malevolence and ill-behaviour was the true cause of the disappointment. I have no reason to imagine her accusation was truly or ill-founded, but that was the colour she gave it; and because frequent illness, sudden and lasting, we are all subject to.

I was soon well acquainted with several leading gentlemen, particularly with Mr. Nicholson Swetart, who was then universally known, and as well remembered from London to Edinburgh, and at every public place of resort, as any worthy spirited gentleman can be, and in consequence respected in the three kingdoms:—He possessed liberality and that goodness of heart (above all to be recorded) which many may envy, but few, very few, can equal, and felt the dramatic furor in a degree, like Mr. Vapid, not to be surpassed; which I mention as no dishonour to himself as an admirer of Shakspeare and Garrick, but to his own fame as a mind full of liberality and understanding, and pay only a just tribute in such declaration.

My days and hours at that period were very happily engaged, and always, when not with company, was certain of an agreeable party with Mrs. Bellamy. My obligations at Edinburgh were extended beyond mediocrity, and in the course of



my repeated visits to that city exceed the limits of expressing a proper acknowledgment.

My first benefit there, was on the 14th of March, 1764:—The Way to keep him; Tragedy A-la-Mode; Bucks have at ye All; with Duke and no Duke: Lovemore, Trapolin, &c. by Mr. Wilkinfon; Widow Belmour, Mrs. Bellamy.

My second (the last night of the season) I acted King Lear, and had the farce of the Pleasures of the Town, aided by Miss Wordly's Goddess of Nonsense. I was not only satisfied, but even delighted with my expedition to Canny Edinburgh; and indeed, from my frequent visits to that place, has occurred the most enviable and pleasing consequences, which on reflection must ever be delightful to my memory; such as renewing my acquaintance there, which repaid my journies with every agreeable advantage, an increase of friends, a kind reception, great and honourable benefits freely attended to, with many high-bestowed compliments, which has left behind an indelible mark of gratitude on my heart that no siler or artist can ever deface, only the slow and sure hand of Time that moulders even matters of magnitude to ashes and dust.

The Edinburgh season ended: Mrs. Bellamy wished me to proceed on an expedition then forming for a new theatre at Glasgow just finished,



but I at that time was in a bad state of health and therefore declined it; as, added to indisposition, I wished once more to review my London apartments, which I had not had the opportunity of seeing from the time of my mother's death, and where all the furniture, clothes, &c. were safely and honourably secured by the undoubted care and regard of Mrs. Alcock in Little Bedford-street in the Strand, and of course I had some matters of business to settle: Indeed I grew worse and worse in health, and, on leaving Edinburgh, by slow stages, like Cardinal Wolsey, (choosing a great comparison) expected just to reach London and die in earnest on my late mother's bed.

Mrs. Bellamy and the company had set off for the west of Scotland, Glasgow—I set off South for my destined home, but intended to halt at my good friend's, Mr. Baker of the York theatre.—I was so very ill, that five or six days were necessary, even with difficulty, to accomplish the journey. When the afflictive *tour* was achieved, I at noon found that good old gentleman busy with bricks and mortar, and in his high glory, giving directions to workmen who were erecting *part* of a new theatre at York, at a great, and his sole expence: It was intended to be (as it now actually is) on a much more capacious scale than the old one, though nearly on the same spot, as he was then



finishing the tail of the new, while the players were employed in the head of the old. Mr. Baker laughed on seeing me, and exulted on valuing himself the younger man in point of comparison, I was so emaciated ; which, joking a-part, he was seriously sorry to behold.

That night was the first benefit a Mr. and Mrs. Powell had at York—The Merchant of Venice ; in which Mr. Powell acted Gratiano, and Mrs. Powell, Portia.—Mr. Powell was a York man—Mrs. Powell a woman of a good and respectable family in Warwickshire. Mr. Baker requested me much to rouse my spirits and play a few nights. As I ever was ready to grasp at a benefit and be touching the cash, to prevent running out, and did not dislike the fatigue of playing : I consented, and on Saturday, April 28, fixed on Othello for my opening character :—It was to have been for the benefit of Mrs. Quin. I was daily abused at York for attempting Mr. Frodsham's part of Othello. When the day came, I was after dinner taken so dreadfully ill, that I never expected to play more. Mr. Frodsham was not to be found to supply my place, and the audience were obliged to be dismissed ; and as the world is too fond of any tale that feeds its appetite for scandal, however gross, absurd, and even impossible, so in that instance did I suffer most inhumanly by the falsehoods



propagated, relished, and believed, without a trait of truth to lead to the matter. First, it was asserted I was afraid to appear, conscious of my having picked their pockets at York on my Tea benefit the year before; next, that Mr. Baker and I had drank half pints of rum and wine till we were so intoxicated, that both were carried to bed speechless; nay, the matter was carried so far, that I had a letter of condolance from Mr. Foote lamenting and reproaching me for having been drove from the York stage for attempting to play when so infamously drunk that I could neither speak nor stand. So these different tales of scandal were all sent piping hot north, south, east, and west, and the simple matter of fact was neither more nor less than my being truly and dangerously ill. So, instead of pity, I heard of nothing but reproach, spite, unmerited abuse, and malevolence. But as we who live to please must please to live—I consoled myself when I heard such rabble-like opinion with the idea of *Coriolanus*——

Ye common cry of curs, whose breaths I did  
Despise as reek o' the rotten fens,  
Whose loves I priz'd as the dead carcase of  
Unburied men, that did corrupt my air.

At present I have the honour to know a few select friends, good and capable to serve myself and family, and to make us happy; and that is a con-



folation *every one* cannot boast— And every reflective mind should observe, that acrimonious and corrofivedifpositions are fuch, that, having in themfelves no fhare in Nature's bounties, confequently they feel no pity towards fuch as have them.

On the Monday at York, 1764, though my illnefs was very little abated, in fpite of abufe, and in fpite of prudence, (having naturally at times a touch of the head-ftrong) I perfifted in being announced for Major Sturgeon on the Tuesday, May 1, 1764. Several perfons called at Mr. Baker's defiring me not to play, for I fhould certainly be infulted; urging alfo, that my ftate of health made it wrong to attempt it: However, on that faid appointed Tuesday, I prefented myfelf in Major Sturgeon, when on my entrance the wrongs the audience had fufained (as they termed it) by their patience and forbearance the year before, and fuch infolence added to drunkennefs none but fuch good tempers would have permitted, therefore an univerfal hifs, with two or three *uncivil* oranges burft at once on my devoted head. I was fuperior to making an apology, or offering an explanation, when fo unjuftifiably and cruelly treated: So I marched and counter-marched as the Major, though fcarcely able to bear the weight of ~~my~~ boots, and was hiffed throughout that act, and



at my exit received every mark of disgrace.—  
What I got for my labour the next day was, that I need not think of playing Major Sturgeon after Mr. Achurch, as he performed it so much better; and they wondered, as I acted at York again, I did not ask pardon for my insults to that public.

It is no more strange than true, though all this vexed and truly mortified me, yet it roused my spirits in part from that languor my bad state of health had thrown me into, as I really did not expect I should have remained long in this world, but soon shut out day-light.

The Spring Meeting was for the second trial that year, on May the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th—I acted on Saturday the 5th, Bajazet, and the Orators, for Old Tenoe's benefit: Very little approbation, nor many marks of the contrary;—their stony hearts began to relent and soften, and my love of acting, though ill, was very different to my present feelings, for I am now truly grown weary and old with service, though more weary than old and incapable.—I was so weak at that time, that at the end of each play I fainted repeatedly from sickness and lack of strength, yet would not give it up, but kept acting away.

In the May Meeting I performed Oakley, and the Apprentice, which in Dublin had pleased so much; but I was unfortunately at York much.



disapproved—I was shocking after Frodsham in Dick.

May 9,—Kitley, and Cadwallader in the Author.—That night I was received into favour:—Several gentlemen desired I would play the Major once more, and they would support me in it:—I was well received as the Major.

May 10,—The Author was repeated, and I seemed restored to their grace—If applause was to fix opinion on that matter.

My Major Sturgeon gained such ground the second time, May 11, and so contrary from my first night's impression, that the late Colonel Thornton, then commander of the York militia, bespoke my play, but particularly desired the Mayor of Garratt. The Colonel requested I would pass an hour with him on that occasion over a bottle at Howard's (now Ringrose's) a few days before my benefit; and the York reader will allow me to be weak in body, as I could not crawl so far without a chair, though in the month of May on a fine day, and the distance a few yards only.

On Tuesday was my benefit, by desire of Col. Thornton.—The Funeral, with the Mayor of Garratt, &c.—and I was, contrary to my expectations, favoured with great boxes and a very genteel house, though not crammed as the year be-



before ; the receipt was 50l. I parted with respect, and was on a much better footing with the public on my departure than the year before, when I left York, after a more superabundant benefit. The vicissitudes of life are strange, and sometimes misfortunes past are stories of delight.

While at York I received a letter from Mrs. Bellamy, congratulating me on my good fortune in not going with the company to Glasgow ; for after the first night of performance the methodists had burst in and wilfully set fire to the theatre, which conflagration had consumed every part of the stage, with all her wardrobe and wearing apparel, except what was on her back ; and that the wardrobe of the theatre had sustained the same fate. I was so far consoled by the accident, finding myself two hundred and forty miles nearer London than I should have been at Glasgow, as to return thanks for my lucky escape ; and rejoiced to find, though I was at York and had got into the frying-pan, I had jumped away from the fire.—These are Mrs. Bellamy's words :—

“ The next day at noon we saw the delightful  
“ city to which we were going at a little di-  
“ stance before us. The magnificence of the  
“ buildings, and the beauty of the river, which  
“ the fineness of the day caused to appear, if pos-



“fible, to greater advantage, elated my heart ; and  
“I anticipated the pleasure I should have in being  
“received by friends, who were not only most cor-  
“dial in their repeated invitations, but whose opu-  
“lence furnished them with power to fulfil their  
“warm promises of support.

“When we arrived at Glasgow, one of the  
“performers exclaimed, “Madam, you are ruin-  
“ed, for you have nothing left but what you  
“have with you in the chaises.” I am at loss,  
“even now, to account for the composure with-  
“which I heard this alarming salutation. I was  
“informed that the stage of the new theatre had  
“been set on fire the night before, and that all  
“my paraphernalia and wardrobe, which lay there  
“unpacked, had been consumed by the flames.

“The conflagration, I found, was occasioned  
“by the following circumstance : A methodist  
“teacher, who held forth in that city, told his  
“auditors, that he dreamed the preceding night  
“of being in the infernal regions at a grand en-  
“tertainment, where all the devils in hell were  
“present ; when Lucifer, their chief, gave for a  
“toast, “The health of Mr. ———, who had  
“sold his ground to build him a house upon,  
“(meaning the theatre) and which was to be  
“opened the next day for them all to reign in.”—



“ The poor, ignorant, enthusiastic hearers of this  
“ *godly* preacher found their enmity against Satan  
“ and his subjects instantly inflamed by this har-  
“ rangue, and in order to prevent so alarming an  
“ extention of his infernal majesty’s empire, they  
“ hastened away in a body to the new-built play-  
“ house, and set the stage on fire. Luckily the  
“ flames were extinguished before any other part of  
“ the theatre was consumed, but the whole of my  
“ theatrical wardrobe, which lay in the packages  
“ upon it, were destroyed. It appeared that this  
“ religious mob had been joined by others, who  
“ wished to take advantage of the conflagration:  
“ as a great deal of the false trumpery upon the  
“ regalia of the mock kings and queens had been  
“ taken away, and being found of no great value,  
“ lay scattered about the fields. As the theatre  
“ was a mile from the city, and the flames did  
“ not burst out so as to become visible, the in-  
“ cendiaries completed their design, and silently  
“ retired. No alarm was therefore given, nor  
“ our loss known till the next morning.”

I left York, but instead of attending to my health, and proceeding, as I ought to have done, to London, I took as good a round-about way to the south as possible, by crossing to the west: I by slow stages set off for Manchester, where the fatigue of two days and a half in getting thither



had overpowered me so much, that instead of sleep I passed the night in agonies. I, however, crawled into the coach that went to Warrington in the morning, and from thence took post-chaise to Frodsham, a village in Cheshire (where Frodsham the York actor was born), and from thence got once more to Dan Smith's at Chester:—

Whitley's company was there, and that manager invited me to play four nights, and to give me the fifth: I could not resist the temptation, and began with no less a difficult character than Richard the Third; the very rehearsal of which occasioned my repeatedly fainting: However, I armed myself with no less than a bottle of Madeira, and went through beyond expectation at night. I acted Shylock, &c. but never got to bed after playing without one or more fainting fits. Mr. Wilbraham intreated I would desist, but I urged as I had gone through so much gratis, I would finish at all hazards, though I knew my life was at stake.—Mr. Didier a comedian (now fixed at Bath) was then at Chester—a friendly agreeable gentleman.

On Friday the 22d of June, 1764, I finished with my benefit, and acted Othello, and Cadwallader in the Author; and after all the wilful dangerous labour I underwent, the receipt of the house was only 14l.—All my acquaintance said I was rightly served, being in a state so very unfit



for such an undertaking. I there received a letter from Mr. Foote, who was astonished I neglected the Haymarket, and the season so far advanced, not informing him my reasons for not being in London at the expected season; and more surprised to hear, by accident, that I was well he supposed, as the Chester paper had given him a clue to find where I was. I then informed him I would in a few days be with him, but feared I could neither assist him nor myself by appearing on the stage, I was so very incapable from severe sickness. In two or three days following I took a place at Chester in a coach that at that time went through Birmingham—I bid adieu to Mr. Smith and Mr. Wilberham, neither of whom I ever expected to see again; instead of that they are gone long since to rest, and I am still in this world living to relate their deaths.—But to keep up one's spirits and hope for the best, is not a bad prescription in sickness or in health; and it is to my astonishment, with grateful acknowledgments to Almighty God for his blessings, that here I am in tolerable health, not yet having swallowed the allotment of dust, to which I am to return.

In the coach were seated Madame Capdeville, (a principal dancer) with her mother: the daughter had been for years a first dancer at Covent Garden theatre, but then returning from Ireland—



I was very much indisposed and discomposed with the journey, but both my fellow travellers were very kind and attentive to me. At broad noon-day the ladies desired the coachman to stop, and having the door opened out they went in full display, and with the most perfect composure performed a deed without a name in the middle of the road; but as it was summer, and dusty, the roads wanted watering: The John Bull of a coachman blushed and hung down his head; and ill as I was I could not refrain from the oddity of the whole groupe, being considered as viewing and not viewing the whimsical transaction—I need not add those females were French, not English ladies. When the coach towards evening stopped at Castle Bromage, I thought, while the ladies were drinking tea, I would attempt to walk a mile and let the coach overtake me; and in case of being enfeebled, as the evening was serene, could stop at some stile or door till I could be relieved by the attending vehicle. I dragged myself on for near a mile, or perhaps more, when I halted, expecting succour from the arrival of the carriage every minute, then endeavoured slowly to proceed for fear of growing chilly; then I waited, then I walked, and that disagreeable predicament I sustained till all my patience was turned to the contrary extreme; and, tottering like



Jane Shore in the last act, was reduced to real pain and uneasiness. It was some time before on the road I could meet a friendly cottage to give me information or a comfortable resting-place; for, by the quick approach of night, my anxiety greatly increased: the first hut I saw I implored a hearing, and related my dismal story of waiting for the coach, &c. and on reciting my ditty, and explaining my distressed situation, the good old woman of the cottage exclaimed—"O! good Sir, you are sadly beside your own sen, for you are now on London coach road; coach is right weel at Brumugum ere this; so you mun cross country like; you look perilous bad Ise sure, and God send you well at Brumugum." I then inquired, with aching heart, how far Birmingham was from thence? She said, "Why a mun not mair than three or four miles *like*, only cross country *like*." Now three or four computed miles by such gueffers generally turns out double the ground they mention, and to the stranger is treble:—He is perplexed at every turning, by not knowing whether he is right or wrong, and that was my situation, besides my sufferings from pain when I attempted to undertake to walk and explore my way to Birmingham:—and this situation, so horrid, was all occasioned by my having committed a blunder a child would have been



whipped for, the want of common observation at the division of the road, and the remedy very easy; for with patience and money in my purse the first countryman for a shilling or so would have gone to the Welch Harp at Castle Bromage and ordered a post-chaise; and besides my illness, all my luggage was in the coach, with cash, clothes, &c. which, without resting a night, proceeded directly for London.—However, in spite of prudence or ability, I determined on this walk to Birmingham with all my imperfections on my head. While the night was making quick approach to darkness, off I set and crossed from place to place, sometimes with intelligence, then not any to be had: I had boots on, and when I had conquered three or four miles, to add still to my misfortune and misery, my knee-buckle got loose, dropped down my boot, and imperceptibly worked itself to the bottom, and at last got under the sole of my foot, which occasioned not only uneasiness, but very excruciating pain, to a degree not to be endured, and no possibility of relieving my anguish; and it frequently shifted in the walking, which caused increasing and variety of torments: I actually should have abandoned myself to despair, and to the first dry ditch for my night's lodging (which then must have finished me); but fortunately casting up my eyes through the



gloomy dusk, I with a most pleasing sensation beheld the steeple of the new church at Birmingham, which I recollected with rapture; it gave a faint gleam of hope, and like a drowning man and the straw, so did I in idea feed my hopes with the luxury of a feather-bed and a negus by twelve o'clock:—I was, however, as may naturally be supposed, much farther off my station than I imagined;—but while there is life there are hopes. I could never have accomplished that event had not the perspiration I underwent been so undescribably violent, that I dared not stop a moment to suffer the winds of heaven to visit my face too roughly; and at the same time, though overpowered with weakness, I felt myself breathe easier, and the fever and hectic heat not so strong as it usually hung upon me. By twelve o'clock, thank God, I accomplished my surprising undertaking, which had given me more pain, anxiety, trouble, and danger, than ever the famous Powell encountered on his walks from London to York and back again. I soon after my arrival at Mr. Barber's, the Swan, got a strong Madeira negus, and on inquiring was much pleased, and obliged to Madame Capdeville, who had kindly taken care to have all my luggage left safely under the protection of Mr. Barber; for her head, aided by the observation of the coachman, had suggested



How my unfortunate blunder had happened, which prevented my having much trouble and inquiries : What had helped the matter was my having been a constant friend to Mr. Barber, the season I have before-mentioned, being at Birmingham under the command of my friend Mr. Hull in 1762.

I was weak the next day and could not get out of bed, but no fever, and the perspiration still continued immoderately. After three or four days I found myself recovering, and wishing to be in London, whether to live or die, I ordered a post-chaise, and in two days and a half got there, without being too much hurried, and received benefit by making the stages easy and suitable as I found my spirits. I went to my own apartments, and there got under good direction, and for once in my life kept regular hours, used moderate exercise, and in a short time was so surprisingly improved in health as to wish being again on the boards, and produced my skeleton figure to Mr. Foote : he was astonished, and expressed himself much hurt at seeing me so ill, but seemed impatient for me to begin at his theatre.—Settling terms took but little time :—he was not mean, but acted generously : I was not unreasonable, for what I asked he immediately granted :—Indeed my terms might be better, as I pleaded apparent ill health, and *not* wishing to play.



The old dish of the Minor was in July appointed for my first onset, which Mr. Foote had not acted, but had deferred, (in the interim wondering at my delay):—and the Minor not having been acted at either theatre from September 1763 till that time, gave it a degree of novelty. I was received that year as an old established favourite of the town. The Haymarket stage was as easy as the York stage was when I had the use of my legs, and where I might be said of late years to have been truly at home.

Tragedy A-la-Mode was revived for Mr. Foote and myself to appear in: Mr. Project, Mr. Foote; the tragedy part all by me, and was often repeated with equal and uncommon applause. I increased highly in public favour, not only from the indulgent partiality of the audience, which in general accompanies such performers as they honour with their good and golden opinion, but I was then particularly industrious, and acting was my only resource for pleasure:—My severe illness had alarmed me so much, that I lived strictly regular. I was more collected, a material article for young or old actors to observe and follow; for though a man be used to wine and good dinners, and be perfectly clear and sober in his room, yet the least flurry or mistake on the stage sets that dinner and wine into a fume, and makes the brain feel de-



ranged and confused; and no actor can be a good timeist on the stage unless he keeps himself cool and collected, and in good spirits of the purest kind, not beholden to the assistance of the grape: "O thou invincible spirit of wine! if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee *Devil*.—To be now a sensible man, and by and by a fool, and presently a beast—Every inordinate cup is unblest, and the ingredient is a devil."—The true refreshment of the performer should be from the fanning gales excited from the pleasure of the audience, while the actor in return feels his heart glowing with rapture and gratitude.

My health improved daily, and by acting with Mr. Foote I had seldom more stage exercise than what was of service to me. The *Apprentice* was also revived, which I acted very often to a crowded theatre.—It was commanded by the Duke of York as a first piece, which occasioned the only little dispute that in the Haymarket theatre ever occurred between Mr. Foote and myself. His Royal Highness commanded it as a first piece, as he urged some very particular engagement.—Mr. Foote appointed the *Minor* as the after piece, and I remonstrated and indeed refused playing *Shift*, enforcing that as all my imitations were so dispersed in the *Apprentice* I could not leave out in the character of *Shift* what I had



accustomed the audience to see ; and if I did perform the same, the repetition of such mimicry, instead of being pleasing, would be offensive. Mr. Foote seemed much displeased, and even disgusted, but yielded to my argument, and on that occasion played Shift himself ; there was no more dispute about it, or was it ever mentioned again.

We had one little sparring-bout in the spring of 1771, which Mr. Woodward soon reconciled. I had acted (by having secretly obtained a purloined copy) his farce of the Devil upon Two Sticks ; and after having committed the fault, and well knowing he would quickly hear of my offence, I, by way of preventing his anger, informed him of my invasion on his property, thinking he would construe it as a very good joke ; but on the contrary he was really much irritated, and by return of post favoured me with the few following whimsical lines.

MY DEAR SIR,

“ YOUR favour brought me the first account  
“ of the Devil upon Two Sticks having been  
“ played upon your stage.—Your letter has de-  
“ livered me from every difficulty, and will pro-  
“ cure me the pleasure of soon seeing you in town,  
“ as I shall most certainly move the Court of



“ King’s Bench against you the first day of next  
 “ term. I have the honour to be, my dear Sir,

“ your most obliged and

“ faithful humble servant,

May 17, 1771.

“ SAM. FOOTE.”

Mr. Foote’s fly indignation, insinuated in the  
 above, obliged me to have recourse to my friend  
 Woodward’s interference, which in a little time  
 after procured me the following, with the olive-  
 branch from the Devil upon Two Sticks ; and as  
 they are both originals imagine they will be deem-  
 ed worth perusal.

DEAR SIR,

“ METHINKS I hear you say to Mrs. Wilkin-  
 “ son—“ Do not you think Mr. Woodward, con-  
 “ sidering all our civility, is a little negligent in  
 “ his return ?”—What signified writing till I had  
 “ materials to write upon ?—I waited for an op-  
 “ portunity to see and converse with Foote in a  
 “ proper moment—have eat with him, *drank* with  
 “ him, took him in a *convivial cue*, and after all  
 “ can assure you there is nothing will happen from  
 “ that quarter unless fresh crimes are committed.  
 “ I saw Macklin the other night, who tells me he  
 “ has travelled lately to Leicester, and intends  
 “ writing to you, I suppose upon the subject that



“ induced him to travel.—I shall send the non-  
 “ sense I promised you the very first opportunity.  
 “ —I expected Mr. Tasker to dine with me at  
 “ my little mansion out of town, but I have seen  
 “ him but once, and that accidentally in the street,  
 “ since we parted at Stilton.—The weather has  
 “ been much against us at the Haymarket, and  
 “ we have done nothing yet to swagger about.—  
 “ When I have been alone in the fields, near my  
 “ dwelling-place, I have sometimes thought of you  
 “ and your theatre.—I have conceived, and per-  
 “ haps may bring forth an *Harlequin at York*  
 “ *racés* : if I am delivered of a well featured kin-  
 “ chin, I will pin it up in a basket and drop it at  
 “ your door—without any offence to Mrs. Wil-  
 “ kinson—to whom, pray, give my most grateful  
 “ compliments, and accept the same yourself from  
 “ him who really is

“ your sincere friend

“ and humble servant,

June 6, 1771.

“ H. WOODWARD.”

Mr. Foote and I, after that time, were on the  
 most perfect terms of intimacy, as the following  
 will evidence amongst a number I have now by  
 me from that gentleman and man of true wit,  
 humour, and genius.



DEAR SIR,

“ I AM much obliged to you for the offer of  
“ your assistance in the town of Newcastle, but  
“ the newspapers have laid out a plan for me that  
“ never occurred to myself.

“ Your old friend D——e has not only lost his  
“ situation with me and Colman, but is on the  
“ brink of losing his nose ; so that his head and  
“ his tail have brought him into a pretty con-  
“ dition.

“ I hope the northern crown fits lightly on  
“ your brow, and that your immediate subjects  
“ are not only dutiful and observant, but that  
“ your whole wide-extended empire pay their  
“ taxes largely and cheerfully. I have this sum-  
“ mer entertained the veteran Sheridan, who is  
“ dwindled to a mere cock and bottle Chelsea  
“ pensioner:—He has enlisted some new recruits,  
“ unfit for service, and such as might be expected  
“ to issue from his discipline.

“ I should be glad to chop upon you in my way  
“ to Edinburgh, for which place I shall set out  
“ about the middle of October.

“ Rofs is with me, ill and indolent ; but how-  
“ ever, thanks to my own industry, the campaign  
“ has been happy enough.

“ Believe me most sincerely yours,

*North-End, Aug. 16.*

“ SAM. FOOTE.”



In 1764, to my part of the Apprentice in London, when acted as the after-piece, I was ever honoured with the continuance of the audience on account of the four last lines, to which I never had less than four plaudits; for my imitations were not only good, but well planned for effect—and much depends on that: One speech in a parody of different writing, would suit for the mimicry of one particular person, which, to imitate another, would seem all discordant, and out of time and place.—The last lines to the Apprentice were as follows, to which are affixed the names for those who knew the actors of those days, to judge how far they were applicable, or the contrary.

*Sparks.* Some act the upper, some the under parts,  
*Sheridan.* And most assume what's foreign to their hearts.  
*Mossop.* Thus life is but a tra--gic, co--mic *jest*,  
*Woodward.* And all is farce and mummery at best.

The regular marking each actor's features and manners in those lines gave great effect, and obtained much approbation.

Mr. Weston was of great assistance in that farce by his inimitable acting of Simon.

I requested Mrs. Rich, on my benefit, to honour me once more with letting me ride her hobby-horses, and give them a summer's airing, as they had not been rubbed down for a twelve-



month, which she kindly granted me, and I acted Bayes by universal desire, and to a house much more crowded than the year before.—That truly excellent actor, Mr. Parsons, was then at Mr. Foote's theatre, and I think will remember my assertion to be, not a chimera of the brain, but a fact.

From a love of cash I performed five Saturdays for the sixth to be clear, at the old theatre on Richmond Hill: Mr. Foote lent me his dresses, and my benefit was on Saturday, August 20, 1764, and was honoured with the sanction of the Duke of York. Lady Peterham and a large party were there, and I was favoured with a brilliant appearance: Most of the little pit was laid into the boxes. The farce of the Citizen I had as a play, and I acted Young Philpot; Old Philpot, Mr. Weston; with Tragedy A-la-Mode.

Mr. Foote's season ended the middle of September.—I sold all my furniture, china, &c. which was very good, though not of the newest fashion, being that of my honoured father's and mother's, originally at the old Savoy residence; but as I had lost my revered good parent, I had not any occasion for constant apartments being kept in London at Mr. Alcock's, who is a most worthy man, and enjoying ease and affluence from the sweet gathered fruits of industry. That business



of sale being concluded I set off for Liverpool, where I was an entire stranger, but had heard money, not grafts, grew in the streets: There I offered my Tea to sale, but they were better judges of traffic than to purchase from one they thought no better of than a hawker or a pedler; and I no more than a destitute pedler at that time, who had a licence to distribute my wares, the inhabitants of Liverpool proved to me cautious and wary: I hired what was called the Bucks-Room, and there I expected a numerous attendance from curiosity; but truth compels me to relate 14l. was the first night's receipt, October the 5th, and the other on October the 8th, 16l.; and they were attended so ill, that my own cash, not that of the Liverpool bank, secured me a carriage to Birmingham, where I cannot boast of superior attraction, the best receipt being only 13l. From thence I returned from the southward to old West Chester, and at that ancient city had an elegant and crowded appearance.—Very strange, that when I relied on myself alone I was well attended by my Chester friends, as before observed. From that place I went to Bristol, where I had a brilliant room; there I received a letter of invitation, forwarded to me from Mr. Jefferson.

On November 28, 1764, I performed for my friend Mr. Fleming's benefit at Bath, who had



the week preceding favoured me with his assistance on my night at the Bristol assembly-rooms.

Early in December, 1764, I set off for Exeter, where Mr. Jefferson, my old friend and acquaintance in Dublin and London, was then become the manager, and every thing promised most flatteringly that he would soon make a fortune: But the substance is often changed for a shadow, nor are managers' gains so easily amassed as the public can gather it for them. His invitation had double allurements,—first, *novelty*, which was ever prevalent; and next, to see so pleasant and friendly a man as he had ever proved to me.—I joined him and his new troop—Mr. Jefferson was at that time endeavouring (not without encouragement) to bring that theatre into a regular and established reputation—He had engaged Mr. Reddish, and many other good performers: Mrs. Jefferson, his first wife, was then living; she had one of the best dispositions that ever harboured in a human breast; and more extraordinary, joined to that meekness, she was one of the most elegant women ever beheld. The city of Exeter had till that time, for some years, been under the management (in theatrical matters) of the old Portsmouth and Plymouth company of comedians, of whom I have made so much mention from the year



1758—but all that set, by the practice of *morning* drams from alehouse to alehouse, besides every hour being employed in large libations with their friends, as they termed them, had, as by universal agreement, one would suppose, almost all of them made their final exit to another world,

Unanointed, unaneal'd; no reck'ning made,  
But sent to their account,  
With all their imperfections on their heads :

Which should be here marked to the general class of actors, as a light-house to mariners in bad weather, to all morning stage-*drinking* town or country performers as a slow but sure poison, a dangerous custom easily attained, but once admitted as a habit, very, very difficult to quit, and the conclusion certain ruin.

With sense and reason holds superior strife,  
And conquers honour, nature, fame, and life.

It will be here scornfully, and perhaps too justly remarked, by unforgiving zealots, what strange dissipated creatures low players are ! but let them recollect that every profession has its degrees and singularities; and I think it as strange a trait when I observe a proud priest (beyond a Wolsey) bursting with Mossopian pride, and will certainly smile when informed he has been holding forth on meekness.



of spirit and charity to all men.—Nor should a preacher's changing his opinion, after having been a constant attendant at the theatre and a professed admirer of the drama, warp my judgment, because he, from *lucrative views*, has altered his way of thinking, as we all do at different periods, according to our state of health, our humour, or our time of life. When I picture pretenders meeting under the cloak of outside purity, I marvel (*like Lady Brumpton*), how one can accost the other with a grave face: Methinks they should laugh out like two fortune-tellers, or two opponent lawyers that know each other for cheats. The great and good in all ages have been protectors of the Muses, and they will out-balance any characters that can be set in opposition: And I must beg permission to advance, that no diversion ever was devised which is so truly calculated to instruct while it entertains; and it is no argument against the stage to affirm, that the morals of some of its professors have been tainted by it; for the evil and perverse inclination will extract malignity from a Howard, a Hanway, or a Mason. Let us ask the most rigid:—Did never the man of intrigue first become acquainted at *church* with her whose unsuspecting innocence he has sacrificed to his passions?—Bid me not drink because Alexander was *poisoned*, nor suffer any fire in my



house because London was *burned*; the reasons in defence of these remonstrances would be of the same force against the theatre.—“O but,” says one of the sanctified, “a young lady dropped down dead some years ago in the Hull theatre.—Poor thing! the Devil found her on his own ground.”—And pray, Mr. Good Man *Pure*, name any place where Mr. Death ever did or does pay any ceremony?

The dreadful earthquake at Lisbon, which happened at the time of high mass, was on a Sunday noon—one half of the lives lost on that occasion were at their duty, though taken unprepared to that undiscovered country that puzzles our will.

Besides, the whole body of actors should not be condemned because a few are unconvertible; since, by the same rule, we may freely abuse the state, the clergy, the army, and every set of people, until one offers itself to our view which has never been disgraced by a member.—This I believe is not in being.

To have filled the theatre (had it been possible) with professed methodists (*the drama's declared enemies*) they would have involuntarily wept at Mr. Garrick's *Lear*, and have laughed incessantly at his *Abel Drugger*. The strict sects, who are



bleſſed with ſuperiority of virtue, ſhould make allowances, from their own ſuperfluity of goodneſs, for the thoughtleſs fallies of men of genius and quick paſſions, who are too liable to fall into miſtakes ; many inconfiderate minds have been too eaſily led into error, and have thereby forfeited their country, friends, and liberty, and by the neceſſary laws have been ſubject to the moſt ignominious as well as heart-felt ſufferings ; yet after reflection, aided by judgment and ſelf-correction, and full conviction of their folly, have providentially been bleſſed with affluence and proſperity.—So the poor player, who ſtruts his life upon the ſtage, is too often drove thereto from acts of indelicacy, and ſeeks refuge in the theatre as his *dernier* reſort.—If unſucceſſful he turns again abandoned, and from intoxication becomes indifferent as to what he does, either in regard to his life, his death, or his reputation ;—but if bleſſed with genius, and the ſeeds of induſtry and attention, and alſo happily foſtered and nourished by the good and affluent, his mind expands, and the child of folly on the ſtage becomes in reality *new born*, proves a ſhining ornament to the theatre, and an example worthy of imitation to his newly-adopted profeſſion, conſequently a praiſe-worthy character, and a credit to univerſal ſociety.—*An honeſt man's the nobleſt work of God.*



At the time of my expedition to Exeter there existed at that place a most eccentric genius and very particular character, Mr. Andrew Brice, a printer.—He was to a degree remarkable in manner, figure, and a thousand peculiarities that cannot be described, but had accumulated by art, genius, and lucky circumstances, an independent fortune:—George Faulkener, of Dublin, was by no means such an extraordinary being; besides, Mr. Faulkener, as a man of benevolent and good qualities, must ever be revered; but in the comparison of goodness the rueful Andrew Brice should not be mentioned.—Alluding to Andrew Brice gives me authority, from Mr. King himself, to insert the following.

When Mr. Garrick wrote the character of Lord Ogleby, it was before he went to Italy; but on his return, and once more engaging with the fatigues of his theatre, he relinquished all thoughts of acting that part, telling Mr. King, for his reasons, that he found his state of health not equal to sustain the run of a new play; and that if he himself should play Lord Ogleby, it would lead into applications from authors to request his performing in their pieces; to prevent which, he had come to a determination not to study any new character whatever, and desired Mr. King would do the part—Mr. King begged to decline—Mr.



Garrick read it to that gentleman—The part he still refused even to the fourth time, and desired the part of Brush instead of Lord Ogleby.—Mr. Garrick still continued pressing, and Mr. King, fearing Mr. Garrick should think him more obstinate than right, took the part to consider of it, and by paying close attention when locked up in his study, he accidentally repeated a few passages in a tremulous voice, which recurred to his ear as something similar to the sound of old Andrew Brice's of Exeter:—He tried again and again, and found he had hit upon the very man as a natural and true picture to represent Lord Ogleby. Mr. King went to Mr. Garrick and privately rehearsed a scene—Garrick was all astonished, and thundered out, “By G—d, King, if you can but sustain that fictitious manner and voice throughout, it will be one of the greatest performances that ever adorned a British theatre.” Mr. Garrick's prophecy was verified, as Mr. King's manner of producing that character before the public was then, and is to this day, one of the most capital and highly-finished pieces of acting with which any audience ever was treated, and will never be forgotten while a trait of Mr. King can be remembered. But, alas! the actor's fame, however great, cannot be recollected many years be-



yond the time he lived : for, ah me ! as Garrick  
observed————

The painter dead, yet still he charms the eye ;  
While England lives his fame can never die.  
But he *who struts* his hour upon the stage  
Can scarce extend his fame for half an age :  
Nor pen nor pencil can the actor save ;  
The art and artist share one common grave.

Andrew Brice, in figure and tremulous manner, was exactly what Mr. King appears to be in Lord Ogleby ; and I could have forgiven Brice had he painted like his Lordship: for he had so much of the lily in his complexion, that he looked (tho' one of the neatest) the most corpse-like Mandarin figure I ever beheld in the various productions of Human Nature.

When I acted Bayes at Exeter, and spoke a speech or two in his manner, it struck the whole audience like electricity.—Mr. Jefferfon, who performed Johnson, was so taken by the surprise, that he could not proceed for laughter. He is now at Exeter, and will, I am certain, recollect and corroborate that circumstance. My benefit, even at this distant time, demands my acknowledgement, it was so numerously attended. I ever think of Exeter with pleasure ; the country that surrounds that city is beautiful, and the air esteemed more



serene and salubrious than almost any other part of the kingdom.—As a proof it is judged so, I have known families, who have been in bad health, ordered by Yorkshire physicians to winter the severe months at Exeter, as the *Montpelier* of Great Britain:—Good eating abounds there, and the market produces an uncommon variety of articles, all in the highest perfection:—I was there in the winter, and in January the face of the country looked well, and produced a verdure not usual at that inclement season in other parts of England. I went from thence for two days with Mr. Jefferson to Plymouth; at the dock I met my old acquaintance Captain Scot of Chester—the situation seemed striking, but I had not leisure, nor was it a time of the year to judge of the prospect of Mount Edgcumbe, &c. to any fair advantage:—I took a peep at the theatre, though on a Sunday; it appeared very decent: Good theatres were not *then* so plenty in any county as at present; the flat scenes I remember moved on a principle I never saw either before or since; they pushed up and down a groove in one straight frame like a window-sash, which must be a good plan, as they, so worked, must be always steady, and the canvas not wrinkled as when on rollers:—One inconvenience must attend it—a great height in the building is required; and another, they must always



gather dust and dirt, which will consequently efface the painting.—One good effect however occurs, no idler, performer, or other, could move the scene and produce the head of Peeping Tom while an act was conducting of the utmost consequence. A trifling accident of that kind *once* disconcerted me much—the audience hissed the person so peeping, which disgrace I took to myself, but had it soon pleasingly explained.—That fault should be more avoided by the performers than it is.

Before I finished at Exeter I had the most pressing invitations repeatedly from Mess. Dowson and Bates at Edinburgh, intimating they could not go on without my immediate assistance—A pretty little trip the end of January from Exeter to Edinburgh!—However preliminaries were soon settled, and Mr. Jefferson had behaved friendly, generously, politely, and attentively. I left him with my best wishes and proceeded to London, where I rested only two or three days, and then posted down for the north, stopped one day with Mr. Baker at York, saw the new theatre—broke down near Durham—the chaise was so shattered with the crush I was obliged to wait on the road till another could be procured; I myself was asleep and not hurt, though I confess a little alarmed. Mr. Dowson was purposely come to Newcastle to treat me from thence post to Edinburgh; we only continued one



day. We got safe to the capital of Scotland.—  
The first night on the road thither we lay at Old  
Camus, which house I believe is now erased—  
from what cause I know not—it was said to be  
haunted; and though I am not superstitious as to  
such idle dreams and fictions of the brain, yet I  
must declare such a noise I never heard in my life  
as during the night at that place. We reached  
Edinburgh the first week in February 1765:  
The theatre had sustained the loss of Mr. Digges  
and Mrs. Bellamy; the only true support was Mr.  
Aickin: There was, it is true, a Mr. Stamper, who  
had been a great favourite, but he was grown quite  
inebriated, and that from *morning* drinking: The  
company was much the same, except Mr. Stam-  
per, Mr. Creswick, a Mr. Parker and Mrs. Pye  
from Ireland; also Mr. and Mrs. M'George.  
We went on tolerably till Richard the Third was  
acted—a character at Edinburgh I was always  
particularly well received in, and with more than  
common applause; but during the summer sessions  
in 1764 Mr. Sheridan had engaged for a certain  
number of nights, and on one of those nights had  
acted Richard, at which time the want of a young  
gentleman or lady to supply the part of Prince Ed-  
ward, rendered it impracticable to have the play  
acted, unless Mrs. Mozeen, whose figure was neat  
and youthful, though bordering at that time on



the vale of years, would quit petticoat hopes, in Lady Anne, of royal coronation, and assume the young monarch in expectation of the same honours. But in the winter Mrs. Wheeler's daughters, who promised remarkably well on the stage, supplied the childrens' parts very ably. Mrs. Mozeen expected her Lady Anne as her stock part, and no supposition could be well-grounded for Mrs. M'George's taking offence at it; for though she had played Lady Anne with Mr. Sheridan in the summer season, she must have known it was necessity and good-nature in Mrs. Mozeen to have resigned Lady Anne for Prince Edward on a matter of emergency: which obstacle being removed, and the children provided for the royal stock, she had double claim to former rights. But on the night Richard was acted, in the scene where Mrs. Mozeen in Lady Anne made her appearance, a general uproar ensued, aye even to the pelting of the lady; the collegians, one and all, having formed a severe party at the malevolent misrepresentations instigated by Mr. and Mrs. M'George, whose wrongs were related with double force to the town, as being cruelly deprived of Lady Anne, a character in which she had been received with so much praise-worthy applause.— Mrs. M'George intended to have produced another Lady Anne to the wondering audience to la-



ment a husband, but Manager Dowson having been alarmed by authenticated intelligence that mischief was brewing, barricaded the entrances, and kept them double guarded by door-keepers, to prevent Roxana with her dagger from gaining admittance behind the scenes, and thereby wounding the bosom of his beloved Statira. It was an hour before the uproar ceased; but Mrs. Mozeen evinced, if she had a little body she had a great soul.

The audience were very attentive, and honoured me much that evening in every scene, except where Lady Anne made her appearance, and then marks of rage, indignation, and contempt ensued.—The riot did not subside with that night, but lasted above a fortnight, and was carried to such extremes, that not any ladies visited the theatre from apprehension of disturbances and outrage. Manager Dowson, who paid adoration to his beloved Statira, even equal to the poet's fancy, levelled all his fury on her desperate foe, Mrs. M'George, by an immediate dismissal, which stroke of sudden impolicy at that juncture only served to enrage the more. Dowson, still faithful to his faithless mistress, rather than Mrs. M'George's party should have reigned triumphant, I verily believe would have taken a torch at noon and set our famed Persepolis on fire; but the Fates did what the manager could not, for though the collegians gave



ammunition and all manual assistance in Mrs. M'George's defence, yet they did not (or could not) afford to offer their purses; therefore, as provisions grew scanty, that tragic queen thought it more prudent and better generalship to retreat than be starved by attacking a fortress she found determined on obstinate defence; and which perseverance stood very little chance of subduing; nor would she trust to the chance of war, which seemed to threaten instant famine; and though she had proved her ability to raise discord, she plainly found she could not in her distressed state raise the necessary supplies: for if Dowson could not pay his regiment with notes from the bank of Air, he could find remaining resources, and draw from Newcastle; but the M'George's forces, tho' few, from desertions, had, to their surprise, only the bank of *air* to rely on, so off she and her spouse went; and soon after her departure, the cause of dispute being removed, Time's lenient hand spread over mutual faults, our theatrical wounds were healed, and peace and harmony once more restored us to our pristine health and vigour.—This is no more, in the relation of our stage battle at Edinburgh, than a strict matter of fact, and can be attested by a gentleman of well-known worth and veracity, Mr. Garenciers, now of York, who was at that time a student at Edinburgh college.



Treating on the subject of riots occasions my proceeding with a few anecdotes.

I remember in the winter of 1751 that *that* was the season Mrs. Cibber was first attacked with her stomach complaint, and Barry, the divine Barry! either had, or pretended he had, frequent sore throats and hoarsenesses: The comedies in which Mrs. Woffington was principal, were generally brought forward on these sicknesses of the tragedians; and at the bottom of the bill, in which she alone stood capital, were generally announced the united names of Quin, Barry, and Cibber; of this she constantly complained, and at last declared that the next time it happened she would not play.—Shortly after Jane Shore was announced, Mrs. Cibber was ill, and the play changed late in the day, but I cannot say to what.—The next day the Constant Couple was put up: Sir Harry Wildair, Mrs. Woffington; with the great names at the bottom of the bill—Woffington kept her word; sent a message at five o'clock she was ill, and positively refused to play—they were obliged to substitute the Miser; Lovegold, Mr. Macklin. By this time the public began to murmur at their frequent disappointments, and took it into their heads that Mr. Rich, the manager, was very ill used by his company, and determined on the next *indisposition* they would interfere and resent for



~~him.~~ Precisely at this time Woffington made her refusal, and on her next appearance in Lady Jane Grey the whole weight of their resentment fell on her—whoever is living and saw her that night will own they never beheld any figure half so beautiful since—her anger gave a glow to her complexion, and even added lustre to her charming eyes; they treated her very rudely, bade her ask pardon, and threw orange peels: She behaved with great resolution, and treated their rudeness with glorious contempt; she left the stage, was called for, and with infinite persuasion was prevailed on to return. However, she did, walked forward, and told them she was there ready and willing to perform her character if they chose to permit her; that the decision was *theirs, on or off*, just as they pleased, a matter of indifference to her.—The *ons* had it, and all went smoothly afterwards, though she always persisted in believing that the party was originally formed by Mr. Rich's family and particular friends, some of whom she did not scruple to name, though I believe she always acquitted him of any knowledge of it.

It is often mentioned in the country that a manager should prevent every riot—that a manager should be ready to answer on any frivolous occasion were that to be really submitted to, how could Mr. Garrick dared to have had a palace at

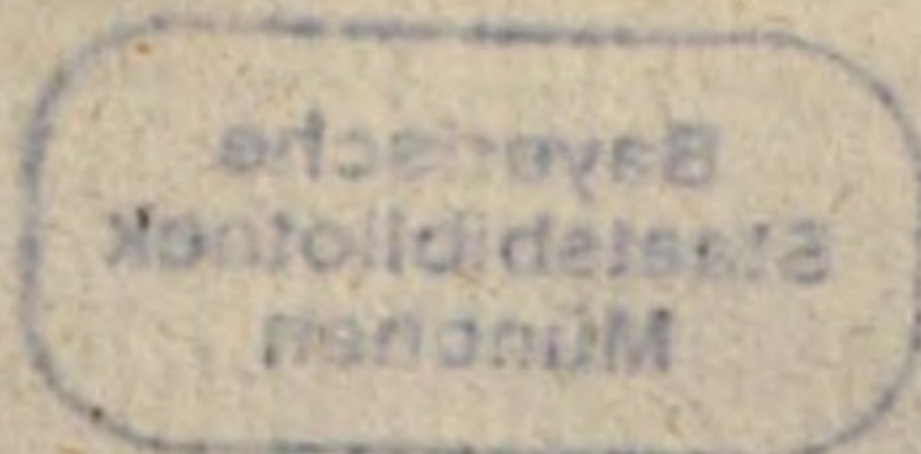


Hampton Court for his chief residence, or Mr. Harris live at Knightsbridge constantly, or be part of the season at Bath, entrusting the care of the theatre and answers to the public in case of unforeseen particular disturbances to Mr. Kemble, Mr. Lewis, or the principal actor then on the spot, if danger or misfortune threatened?—These suppositions in the country leads to incendiary epistles. But how can such dæmons, pretended friends, or secret enemies, be answered either as to their ill-will or affected good wishes, equally immaterial and not availing? as, be the contents right or wrong, true or false, good or bad, it would be ridiculous and really loss of time to answer what is avowedly fabricated by *nobody*. I had in consequence thereof formed a resolution in future never to read any one of the kind, and had in fact carried the resolve into practice; but accident only broke the determination, for one morning last York races, on opening a letter and not perceiving any name, I threw it on the table, which Mrs. W. perused, and hastily declared I had an estate left me. I instantly took up Mr. Anonymous, and read the following lines:

SIR,

*Petworth, in Sussex.*

“ BY the death of a Mr. Whicker you are supposed to have right to considerable property,





“and desired to send your mother’s maiden name  
“respectively to the executors—Mr. Ireland here,  
“and Mr. Wait of Byworth, near Petworth.”

*Aug. 21, 1789.*

I on inquiry was soon informed by a most respectable family in Essex, that the executors had been from such letters greatly plagued and tormented by different applications, and that one person had actually travelled some hundred miles, with great fatigue, trouble, perplexity, and expence, to attain the Suffex estate, but was soon after his arrival convinced it was all a bubble.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.



















1-4 = 1000. -

11.10.83







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York (1790)

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